

MOONWORKER

Stephen Coester

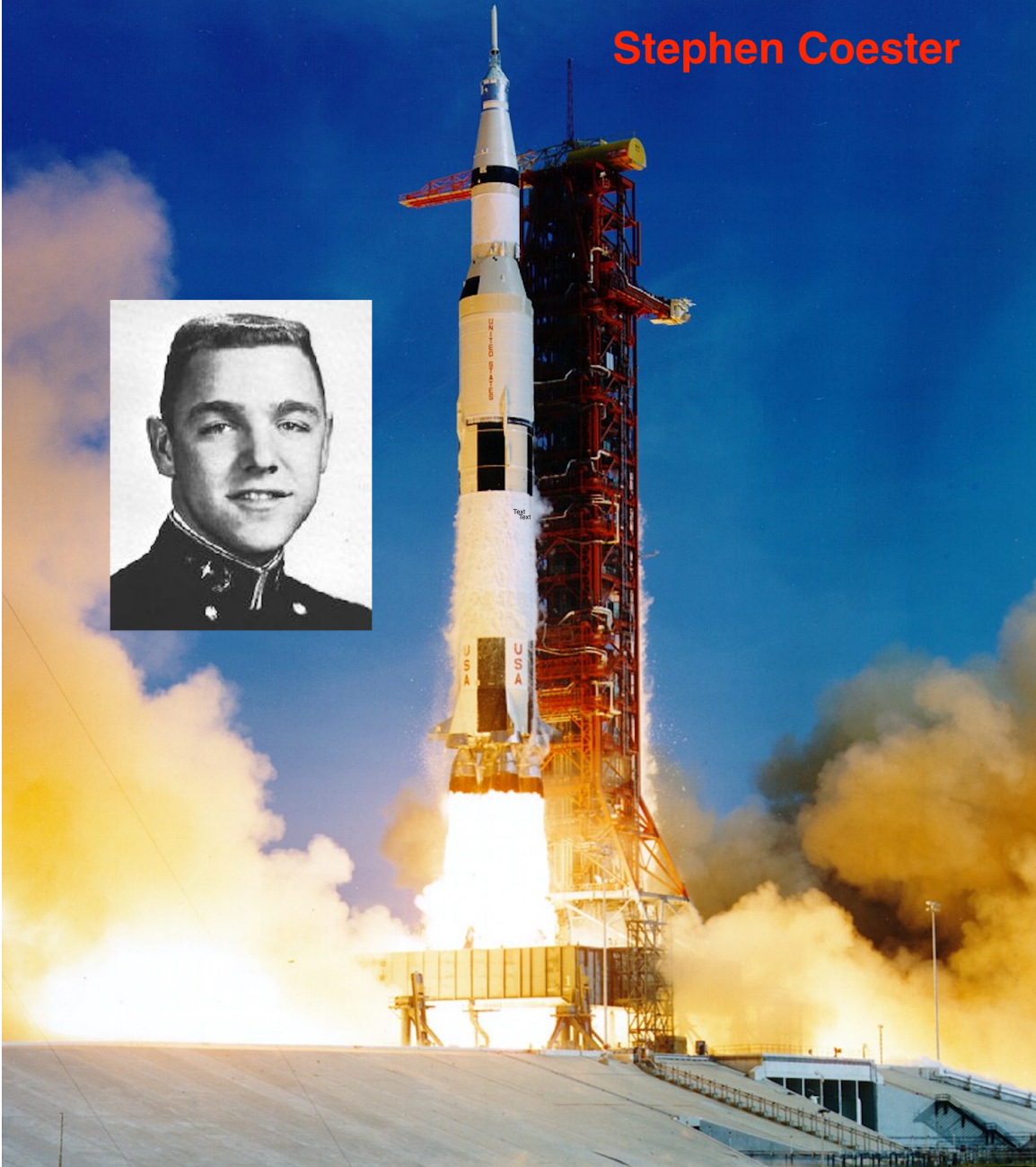


Table of Contents

Birth and Early Years	6
Coester Genealogy	7
Our First Home	11
Move to Kirkwood	15
Robinson Elementary School.....	22
Nipher Junior High School	26
Move to Glendale.....	28
Kirkwood High School.....	31
U.S. Naval Academy Years	38
Naval Academy Cruises.....	45
War in Vietnam	53
Meeting Yvonne	57
Wedding and Early Married Life.....	60
The NASA Years.....	66
Apollo	66
Atlas-Centaur	73
Space Shuttle.....	74
SCUBA Diving Tales.....	86
1960's Technology	90
Life in Rockledge, Florida	94
The Children and Grandchildren.....	97
Our Pets.....	102
Skiing Adventures	110
Our Travels	115
Naval Academy Website.....	128
Appendices	129
Appendix 1	129
Tales from the Natatorium	129
Appendix 2	132
Class of '63 - The Beginning- -From Steve Coester	132
Appendix 3	136

The 18th Company Pre Christmas Leave Party A Sordid Tale of Misused Youth	136
Appendix 4	140
Launching Apollo 11 to the Moon.....	140
Appendix 5	143
Space Shuttle Challenger Disaster.....	143
A Personal Perspective.....	143
Appendix 6	147
Memories of Space Stephen H. Coester.....	147
Appendix 7	170
A Space Shuttle Story	170
Appendix 8	179
Yvonne and Steve Coester's Fiftieth	179
Wedding Anniversary	179
Appendix 9	189
Steve's Shark and Cave Adventure	189
Appendix 10	192
Yvonne and the Giant Shark.....	192
Appendix 11	197
Grabbed By An Octopus	197
Appendix 12	199
Aground at Sea	199
A Poem by Steve Coester.....	199
Appendix 13 Coester Genealogy	203
Appendix 14	230
TIGER CRUISE '94 A DREAM CRUISE ON AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER BY STEPHEN COESTER.....	230
Appendix 15	235
September 11, 2001 The NYC Terrorist Attack	235
Appendix 16 Drag's Handbook	239
Appendix 16 A Living in the 40's and 50's	266
Appendix 17 USNA63.org Bio.....	270
Steve Coester Current Data.....	270
Appendix 18 Apollo-Saturn Liquid Hydrogen Firing Room Consoles.....	274
Appendix 19 Nicky McCabe and Ben Dent Wedding Speech	279

Life and Times of Stephen Holliday Coester



For people of my age World War II was a current event because we were alive when it ended in 1945. But WWI which had ended just twenty-three years before we were born was ancient history and the Civil War might as well been in the age of the Roman Empire, although as little kids we were still fighting it at least in Missouri. Half the boys would have on Union blue kepis and half would have Confederate gray. We knew Grant and Lee and even the names of their horses: Cincinnati and Traveler. And when we visited Mississippi those kids were violent in their hatred for us Yankees.

As I got older I began to realize that those battles and other historic events weren't really so long ago. From the end of the Civil War until my birth was seventy-six years so the span of time to my present age from the Civil War is just two of my lifetimes. For anyone my age you know how darn fast those years have flown by.

I suddenly realized that a lot of history has occurred during my seventy-five plus years so decided to write this history.

Birth and Early Years

I was born in Deaconess Hospital in St. Louis 7-14-1941. During World War Two we stayed with Momma Wolf and Otto Wolf, my maternal grandparents in their home at 325 Stark Court Webster Groves, Mo. while my father was up in the Yukon surveying the Alaska Highway.



325 Stark Ct

In about 1963 my grandparents moved to an apartment and my parents moved into the Stark Court home for a short time.

[Return to Beginning](#)

Coester Genealogy

Perhaps right here is a good place to say a little about where I came from. My parents are Samuel Holliday Coester and Lois Grace Wolf Coester. My paternal grandparents are Frederick Coester and Florence Holliday Coester. Maternal grandparents are Otto Wolf and Sophie Lange Wolf. All except the Hollidays are German and immigrated to the U.S in the mid 1800s. The Hollidays were Scotch-Irish and were here since the late 1700s. I have one sibling, a brother Jan Wolf Coester who is two years older than me. I have the same wife for fifty-three years, Yvonne Eva Lind Coester; two children Dean Coester (born 5/21/64) and Yvette Miller (born 7/6/66) who are both single; and three grandchildren Stephen Miller (25), Kristen Coester Custer (24) and Nickolas Coester (19.)

My Dad was born in 1917 and Mom in 1920. I don't know a lot about my Mom's Wolf/Lange side of the family except that they were comfortably middle class. My grandfather, Otto Wolf, worked for Brown Shoe in St. Louis but I don't know what his job was. He was a clerk in the Army during World War I. The Langes were pretty well off and I remember great grandmother Lange's big brick home on Woodlawn Ave. in Kirkwood, MO. My Mom was attending Washington University, which was pretty rare for a woman back then, when she became pregnant with my brother and "had" to get married. She dropped out of college after two years.

My Dad's life was interesting. His mother Florence Holliday was of the St. Louis Hollidays who were social elites and among the wealthiest families in St. Louis. Most of them lived on the two most prestigious streets in St. Louis, Westmoreland and Portland Places. Here's a photo of my Dad's Uncle Joe's home.



Designed by Hellmuth & Hellmuth, 52 Portland was built in 1915 for Ida and Charles Bascom.

As a young child I remember visiting my great grandmother Holliday every Christmas in a great marble hall in her mansion. Very different from my lifestyle.

My grandfather, Captain Fred Coester, was a career Army officer, who somehow managed to marry into society. He was a stern and abusive man. It is obvious that my Dad was being raised with the proverbial silver spoon financially. They lived in a large home in Webster Groves on Tuxedo Blvd. and owned acres around it. This may be the house, which is now in the middle of a residential development.



But when he was just eight years old his mother died, the rumor being during a botched abortion. Fred got remarried before the proper mourning period and the Holliday money was cut off. Then came the Great Depression so life went from silver to wooden. My Dad was thrown out of the house when he was fifteen years old. According to my Uncle Newt, who idolized his older brother, it was because my dad had put the make on his stepmother. I don't know where or how he lived after that until he met, impregnated and married my mother. My Dad has always been an enigma to me. Even though I don't think he completed high school, per his brother, he was the greatest athlete to ever come out of Webster High being a great high diver and high jumper in track. Even late in his life I marveled at how he could dive, doing twists, gainers and flips. Dad also was an accomplished clarinetist, who could immediately pick up any tune. He was well read and had an extensive knowledge of history. His record album collection was extensive and he could give the background of all the classical music. Unfortunately he was also an alcoholic, but more about that later.

My Mom died in 1985 at age sixty-five and Dad at 76 in 1993. both from smoking related cancers.

What genealogical information I have is in [Appendix 13](#).

[Return to Beginning](#)

For an excellent summary of how it was to grow up in the 1940s and 1950s see [Appendix 16A](#)

Our First Home

My only memories of WWII are blackout curtains, ration books, and seeing the troops march in St. Louis after returning in 1946. I was born five months before Pearl Harbor and was four when the war against Japan ended.

After the war we lived in a little bitsy wooden creosote painted house, more of a shack on Westside Ave by the railroad tracks, in Webster Groves, MO until I was eight years old. My brother Jan's and my room was about six feet by nine feet and we had a bunk bed that took up most of the space. We did have a big back yard where we played baseball endlessly. We just had a radio on which we would gather at the kitchen table and listen to shows like The Lone Ranger, The Shadow, and Sargent Preston of the Yukon. Listening to the Cardinals baseball or the Hawks basketball on radio was more real than watching them on TV.

One story from when I was four years old and had just moved to Westside was often told by my grandmother to show how "cute" I was. One day I was told to go to the little "corner market", which were small family owned stores equivalent to the 7-11 of today, and get a dozen eggs. This involved crossing Big Bend Blvd, which was the major road through Webster Groves. In later years my parents would be in jail and I would have been in foster care for them allowing me to do that at four years old. I made it to the store and carefully counted out twelve eggs. In 1946 eggs didn't come in cartons. They were in a big box and you would put them in a paper bag. As I walked home I noticed hen feathers and chicken poop on some of the eggs. When I got home my mom took the eggs and noticed that now there were only eight eggs not twelve. She asked me why and I straight out told her that four were dirty so I threw them out. Now isn't that too cute?

My biggest memories from there included attending Goodall Elementary School and learning to ride a 26" bike at age four. My dad removed the seat because I was so small and I sat on the cross bar with the seat spike sticking up behind me. Also waiting for the iceman to make his deliveries to neighbors' iceboxes so we could snag a few slivers, and seeing my first TV at a neighbor's which had a round screen about six inches round. We were fortunate to have an electric refrigerator. The milkman still had a horse and wagon for his deliveries and there were still lots of horse drawn wagons in downtown St. Louis. In 2017 milk delivery is long in the past.



Also there were electric street cars downtown.



All my childhood Mom just had a wringer washing machine and hung the clothes outside on the line in heat or cold.



And here's a typical 2017 washer and dryer.



My parents never worried if we were gone all day out in the woods or walking the railroad tracks. Cowboys and Indians was the game of choice. A friend of my Dad's gave my brother Jan and me an old black powder, percussion cap rifle when we were about eight and six. We would use it to play with and managed to do what the Civil War soldiers had failed to do. We broke off the stock and had to tape it back together with black electrical tape (the precursor to duct tape). The gun was a Smith Carbine from the Civil War. Here's one in the Gettysburg museum.



[Return to Beginning](#)

Move to Kirkwood

In about 1949 we moved to a nicer house at 516 McLain Lane in Kirkwood, Mo.



The room over the garage was Jan and mine. The trees in the photo were there and we would climb and fall out of them. We got the first dog I remember, Nipper then and he lived until I graduated from college. I grew up in this house for five years until I was thirteen. Attended Robinson Elementary through sixth grade where I was proud to be a Patrol Boy getting to wear a badge and help the kids across the street at school. Was in Cub and Boy Scouts until I was twelve and found out girls were more interesting.



Nipper



Boy Scouts Order of the Arrow

My Dad's first car, a 1948 Nash Ambassador.



We played Koury League baseball. We were taught to shoot and I'd regularly take the .22 rifle out in the woods by myself at age ten or so. We had a shooting range the length of our basement. I only hunted a few times with friends. Got a rabbit or squirrel or two. Shot at a deer with my 20 gauge shotgun and missed.



My 1905 Winchester .22 rifle. I still have it.



Jan sitting and Steve

We got our first TV in about 1950. Black and White and just three channels. Our first color set we got in 1967 and I actually built a 25" Heathkit TV and a stereo receiver that we had for years



Here's today's (2017) TV.



Here's a typical stereo , tape deck and record player from about 1970 and a 2017 iPod that does infinitely more.





2017 Ipod

Recorded music advanced from records to reel tapes to 8 track tapes to cassette tapes and then to CDs and DVDs and by 2017 to tiny cards or thumb drives that hold thousands of records..



[Return to Beginning](#)

Robinson Elementary School

Here's where I attended school from third to sixth grade.



Robinson School

Every school had a couple of kids with crutches and braces from polio. In 1954 we got inoculated for the first time and polio almost disappeared. Penicillin was widely used in WWII in the forties. Before that like in 1918 20 million people died of the flu of all things.

I was a good student and never had any homework at night because I always did the next day's assignment at school while the teacher was explaining the last one. I was in sixth grade sat next to the World Book Encyclopedias and I would always grab one to read when I was bored. I could spout off a paragraph about every subject in the World. It was from reading them that I learned about the Naval Academy and started my quest to get to go there. Also about that time a WWII documentary, Victory at Sea, was on. It also made me want to Go Navy. I still love the Richard Rogers music from that show.



When we moved to Kirkwood, MO, I was way behind the third grade kids at Robinson School when we moved and had to learn the multiplication tables really fast.

Jan and I did a lot of horseback riding at Valley Mount Ranch even “working” there during one summer when I was eight or nine in exchange for rides. We would ride our bikes down Marshall Rd. out past Treecourt Pool to get there. We had to go about a mile along Highway 66 to get there. One day my tire slipped on the raised edge of the road and I fell into the traffic. almost got run over. Total ride was about six miles each way and Marshall Road was a mile long hill that could get us up to fifty miles an hour going down and we had to walk our bikes up. Can you imagine letting kids do that now? My Dad’s philosophy was to let us run loose and if we wanted to do something we had to get there on our own. He refused to take us to the movies so we had to walk, which I hated as a seventh grader, but loved the freedom later.

Since Dad worked at Lambert Field airport, Jan and I spent lots of summertime hanging around the hanger and airplanes and flew a lot.

Steve's Flying Experiences

I probably had more opportunity than most to become a pilot. My dad worked at Lambert Field in St. Louis for most of his life as Operations Mgr at a small transient hangar called Interstate Airmotive. It was right next to McDonnell Aircraft and I'd watch the original F2H

Banshees, FH1 Phantoms F101 VooDoos, and F3H Demons doing run ups and flying. Also across the field was an Air Nat'l Guard base that flew F4U Corsairs. At about age eight or nine I spent my summers at the hanger running around and exploring. In the hangar rafters they had a parachute loft left over from WWII which was just a bunch of catwalks and a place to hang the chutes. My brother and I would spend a lot of time up there. Out back were a couple of junked T6 Texans that I'd sit in for hours and pretend I was flying. I also helped with moving aircraft, fueling, wiping windshields, etc. One time I fell off the running board of the fuel truck as it was going across the tarmac and about killed myself. Strangely enough my very daring brother, Jan never learned to fly either. I think our dad was so critical and intimidating that we feared his sarcasm if we didn't do perfectly. Dad was so encouraging to Dean that he was a big reason that Dean took that path.

One day during my time at Lambert Field there was a huge storm and possibly a tornado or microburst. Planes was sailing all over the field and several small planes flipped over and a few actually jumped the ten foot fence over at McDonnell. A DC3 got away and went rolling across the field. I went outside to "play" in the wind and got slammed against the hanger next door.

Just now I realize that I was very young, but I was a scared flyer back then.



Piper Cub

Pilots would take me and my brother up all the time in Piper Cubs. I remember that when the plane banked left I would always bank my body right and didn't care much for turbulence. I remember one flight in strong winds when I swear the plane was moving backward in relation to the ground. I also flew a lot in tail dragger Cessnas, Beech Bonanzas, Twin Beeches 18. Lockheed Lodestars. DC3, and C46. I enjoyed the larger planes. I always loved when the N.A Navion would come to the hangar. That was about the hottest small aircraft in the 50's. It wasn't until I got to USNA that I overcame my fear of heights and found out, "that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself." Before that I tried to avoid situations where I had to face heights.

See [Appendix 1](#) for my story of overcoming my fear of heights.

One summer years later during summer leave from USNA I was a "stewardess", baggage handler, what all on a DC3 flying execs up to the Canadian north woods for fishing, boozing, etc. Great job paid \$100 per week plus staying with the paying guests and doing what they did.

By age 11, I started having jobs (golf caddy, pool locker boy, cook and lifeguard) plus baseball and tennis and ceased going to the airport. Obviously I didn't yearn to be a flyer or I could and would have. I didn't fly again until leaving home to go to the Naval Academy in the TWA Lockheed Constellation, the most beautiful airliner ever.

[Return to Beginning](#)

Nipher Junior High School

From seventh to ninth grade I went to Nipher Junior High in Kirkwood.



Nipher Junior High

At Nipher (what a name) my first friends were Lucky Browder and Jamie Carlin. What a difference. Remember how rolly polly Lucky was. Well soon as I became a sophisticated Junior High seventh grader, I dropped Lucky for the clique. Carlin and I were always stealing hubcaps and tailpipe extensions and shoplifting Playboys just for the hell of it. Fortunately, I saw that he was always going to be in trouble and I steered away. About that time tennis and Del Campbell came into my life and kept me on the straight and narrow pretty much. We became best friends through high school and spent many days at his house wrestling in the back yard, shooting hoops, and playing together. And then there was tennis. We started tennis together and during our last three years of high school had thirty-five

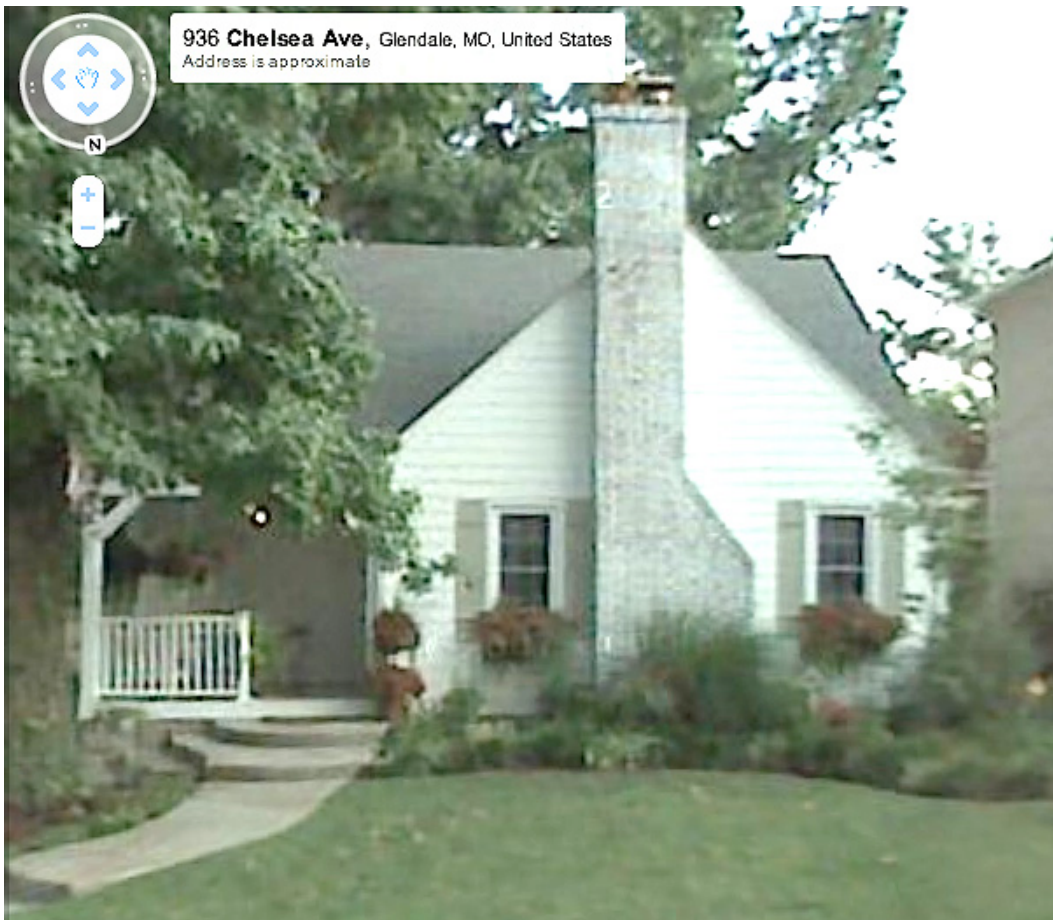
wins and just one loss. Del remains nationally ranked in age group well into his seventies.

I was on Student Council at Nipher and through high school.

[Return to Beginning](#)

Move to Glendale

While at Nipher we moved a couple of miles to 936 Chelsea in Glendale, Mo.



The whole attic was one room finished in knotty pine and was our bedroom, a huge not insulated room burning in the summer and freezing in the winters., but a neat hideout for us. We had a pingpong table up there.

Up to the time I was about twelve, Dad tried very hard to be a good father with Scouts, shooting and riding, but after that he became an

alcoholic, and home life became hell with lots of yelling and fighting. I detested him until he smashed our pink and black '55 Desoto (bought while drunk) and then joined AA when I was 16. That car looked like this



That's when we ended up with the 54 Buick; great car! However, one time I was in downtown St.Louis and the brakes totally failed. I drove all the way home with no brakes by down shifting. Somehow made it without hitting anything.



Poor Jan never had a good father because he went away to college about that time, but Dad was okay after he quit drinking in my Junior and Senior years, although by that time we were busy being independent young men. Dad went on and off the juice the rest of his life and caused Yvonne and me lots of problems until his death in 1993. Mom and Dad move near us in about 1975.

[Return to Beginning](#)

Kirkwood High School

For the last three years of high school attended Kirkwood High School.



Great three years at KHS. I was in the top ten percent, a student officer, a varsity athlete and got along with everybody. As soon as I reached sixteen I bought my first car, a 1949 Mercury for \$250. Even though our family was among the poorest in a very affluent area, I was the envy of my peers by having my own car. I afforded it by working as a golf caddy from the time I was eleven and then at Treecourt Pool all through junior and senior high. Started there as a locker boy, became a cook and finally a lifeguard when I was old enough. I also drove a nursery school bus mornings and evenings. I earned \$2 to cut a yard, \$5 for caddying doubles (two bags) 18 holes, 35 cents per hour to babysit, \$30 to \$45 per week at Treecourt Swimming Pool and \$100 a month driving nursery school kids to and from school. Should have had a chauffeur's license but didn't. My allowance was \$2.50 a week that could either pay to ride the bus to school, buy lunch or date. After age 13, I paid for all of my clothes.

Dad paid my auto insurance.



1949 Mercury

That car got me in a lot of trouble. One time Del and I were drag racing down highway US 66 and got pulled over by some hick sheriff. He was also mayor of his one horse town. He asked us if \$50 would be too much. We paid him off and no record was made.

More seriously in a race between a '57 Plymouth and a '57 Chevy , we were speeding along side by side in both lanes of a two lane road after midnight at over a hundred miles per hour. I was riding shotgun. The drivers had no concern that in front of us was a major intersection. By sheer chance as we approached another car was coming from our right. Screeching of brakes and sliding sideways barely missing the other car, we safely made it past. My driver was really shook up and slowed down and pulled off the road only to slide down into a roadside ditch. We had to call his dad and a wrecker. He came up with some creative tale that I'm sure his dad didn't believe for a second. That was so close it could have been the end of this whole bio.

Basketball was my first love, but unfortunately all I had was a great jump shot. No moves, no height. I never played a second on the 9th grade team. As a senior I thought I should have been on the team, but Coach Miller had different thoughts, plus I had shin splints something horrible and could barely hobble. He advised me to stick with tennis. Later I was a "star" in navy intramurals and adult leagues and once scored 34 points in a game, not a season. Oh, dreams of glory! Tennis was second to b-ball but I could earn my letter and learned to love it as I improved.

On October 4, 1957 The Soviet Union launched Sputnik into orbit. It was the first such object in human history. I was sixteen years old and a Junior in high school. This was a significant event and really scared our country, which thought the Russians could bomb us from outer space. Our own space program was going nowhere fast. We were blowing up rockets left and right. All us students had green canvas covered three ring binders for our school work. They were nice to doodle on. I remember drawing a Russian rocket soaring successfully into space. And beside it an American rocket lifting off and exploding just above the launch pad. Little did I know that just seven years later I would be starting my job helping send Americans to the moon.

Until I went to college my Dad made \$100 per week. Mom made \$50 a week on an assembly line making Kotex. I knew that others were "rich" but I never felt "poor". We always had a car ('48 Nash) and a refrigerator. Mom never had any washer except a wringer one and hung up all the clothes outside in summer or freezing winter. We wore cheap Keds tennis shoes, \$3, to school and by Christmas they were ripped out at the sides. We wore them with our socks hanging out until the next year. When I became a teenager I paid for Converse All Stars for \$8. Wore either Levis and white tee shirts or khakis and button down shirts depending if we were James Dean or Pat Boone that day. Jeans were about \$4, button down dress shirts \$5 and a good suit \$50.

Birdseye frozen food has been around since the 1930s as had TV. However the early ones had a circular CRT in a massive cabinet.

Before I was eight I only remember one family with a TV. We got our first one in 1950 so I was nine and as I remember it was actually pretty modern, rectangular CRT and good quality. Just ABC, NBC and CBS for about ten hours a day. Howdy Doodie, Lone Ranger, Roy Rogers, Milton Berl, Ed Sullivan, Steve Allen. Lots of test patterns.

Everyone remembers having to write research papers in high school and then college. Since at least 1876 and through my college years you would go to the library and search through the card catalog to find the books you needed for your research. For every book there were several cards so one could find it by title, author, subject, etc. Since there was no "on-line", the library was where you physically had to go to do your research. It wasn't until about 1990 when computers became common that you could do all of your research just by typing in search terms on sites such as Google.



Once you had done your research you would write out the paper in long hand (cursive) and then have to type it on a typewriter.



The typewriter took one sheet of paper and in most classes if you made a mistake you had to start all over so you might get to the end of the sheet of paper and, oops, a typo. Rip out that sheet and start all over. Typing the paper could take longer than all of the research. What a blessing once computers, auto spell and autocorrect came about long after our college years.

We never were religious. I went to church only during basketball season so I'd qualify to play church league b-ball.

An incident that really affected my life occurred between seventh and eighth grades. I was molested by Coach Carroll the ninth grade football coach and Civics teacher. As soon as he tried to touch me I escaped, but for the rest of my time in Kirkwood I would get the chills whenever I saw a blue and white Ford hardtop like he drove. Of course, at age 13, I had no idea how to handle the situation and I can't imagine how my parents could have been so naive. They even had him over to the house. Fortunately somebody else turned him in.

Then there were the girls. Karin Grosse was my first girlfriend in seventh grade. We would walk home together to my house then she'd continue on to hers. Next came a hot and heavy eighth grade romance with Sybil Brooks. I don't remember how that ended, but she taught me how to kiss. Oh somewhere there was Ruthie Hatfield

for a while. She was beautiful when I saw her later in college years. Judy Breil was always my dream girl, but I never asked her out. I'll always remember one party in eighth grade when she had a spat with her boyfriend (Carlin, I think) and I danced and snuggled with her all evening. I don't remember girls in 9th and 10th grade before I could drive, and then came Maria Von Schuschnigg. We were steadies most of 11th grade and the first real love of my life. I still have regrets because I dropped her in twelfth grade because she was acting really "strange". Later I learned that her Mother whom I adored was dying of cancer. During college we again dated whenever I was home and I thought we would one day marry---until I met Yvonne. Dr. Von Schuschnigg, the Chancellor of Austria in 1938 when Hitler invaded, and I had some weighty discussions, which I still treasure. He liked me and/or my USNA uniform. I never have known whether Maria was upset or not about me marrying Yvonne, so I guess she wasn't. She married some Count from France. Senior year of high school I played the cool stud dating the Junior class girls and must have dated 15 different girls. I loved Senior year! In college I also dated Karin Grosse again and she actually came to my Junior Ring Dance at Annapolis where I met and fell in love with Yvonne. Karin and I were really good friends. I visited her Mom in 1985 when I was in St. Louis for my grandmother's funeral.

We were post big band era. We started Rock and Roll in the '50s. McDonalds came to Kirkwood about 1955. 15 cents for a burger. We had malt shops and Parkways which were like Dennys where we hung out after ball games and dates. Also Steak and Shake or A&W Root Beer with the waitresses on roller skates. Dates were going downtown to St. Louis to the movies (60 cents) in the enormous old time theaters. Or to watch the Cardinals play baseball (\$3). A really serious date was a evening cruise on the Mississippi on the SS Admiral stern wheeler. It looked super modern then and still looks modern today.



[Return to Beginning](#)

This photo pretty well sums up how kids were raised in the 1940s and 1950s.



U.S. Naval Academy Years

Finally on to the Naval Academy July 7,1959- June 5,1963.



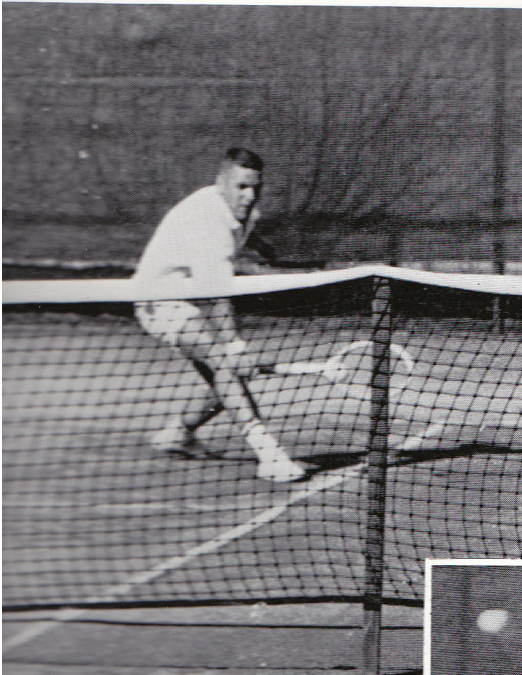


I always do things the hard way. It wasn't until May '59 that I finally got accepted to the Naval Academy to report July 7, 1959. I had no idea where I was going if I didn't get the appointment. On what slender threads our lives revolve. I had two second alternate appointments and both guys ahead of me got in. (one ended up the Brigade Commander). I was accepted under the "qualified alternates" law. I was sure all midshipmen would be 6'4", student body presidents, star athletes etc., and here comes 5'8" Steve who had lost the Junior Class President election while running unopposed to Frank MacDougal. What a humiliation!

For my recollection of my first day at the Academy see [Appendix 2](#) .

Well the four years at USNA were the best of my pre-married life. I ate it up and gloried in being there where I had dreamed of going since I first saw a World Book article at Robinson Elementary. After an average first year, they saw the light and placed me in advance classes where one was almost assured good grades. In the Junior year I was number two in my class overall. I had a great scholastic year as well as being in the top 10% in all the P.E. and being a real grease ball militarily. As a Plebe I decided I was going to be a boxer and I trained and trained and was hard as nails. Unfortunately, I found out I have the reflexes of a slug and could deliver one punch to

my opponents three. At least I learned it doesn't hurt too badly to get hit which happened often. So after missing the summer tennis season, I begged for a chance to try out for the Plebe team. Okay start at the bottom and beat everyone the coach said. I managed to make Number 5 singles and three doubles and I got my plebe letter.



Well that didn't put me in good stead for the Varsity, but I hung in there and stayed on the team the next year but nonplaying. Second class year I was going great guns at number 4 for eight matches and then separated my right wrist. Needed one more match to letter and didn't get it. Senior year we switched coaches and he said he didn't

want any non-lettered Seniors. Again I begged and went through the same drill of having to beat every one. Ended up number one during the fall season (while the real number one (Lee Pekary) and two were playing squash). During the real Spring season I was number three but in a strategic move the coach played me at number 5 singles and three doubles where I had a marvelous season, including two wins over Army. I was down 5-3 in the last two sets and won both 7-5; the highlight of my tennis career with Jan watching! Lee Pekary and I played doubles together and I think we were undefeated. Overall my record was twenty-nine wins and twelve losses.



Those were also the glory years for Navy football; Heisman Trophy winners Belino and Staubach, and four victories over Army.

Because I was smart and because of tennis I had a pretty easy time at the Naval Academy. During plebe year, which is a whole year of hell week with full scale harassment from the upper classmen, I was on athletic training tables for two-thirds of the time. There you were treated like a jock and avoided most of the harassment. Of course

when I wasn't on the training table I was fair game, but since I was pretty squared away I never had much trouble.

Academics were always easy for me and I had good discipline. After each class I would return to my room and immediately do my assignments. At night when everyone else was working late, I was finished and could relax. I never had to cram for final exams, figuring I either knew the material or not...and generally I guess I did because I ended up in the top ten percent and was a wearer of "stars" for academic achievement.



Mom and Dad and brother Jan

I was also in the Color Company one year. I was one of the top forty midshipman officers, a "three striper". I ate up the cruises, the ships, flying jet fighters and all that macho stuff. I thought I would be a pilot or a SEAL

We marched in JFK's 1960 Inaugural parade in freezing weather.



We had several practice parades around the track by the Fieldhouse. I never figured out why. We did enough marching as it was and it was just going around in circles. Maybe the company commanders needed to learn how to say Eyes Left for the only time in their lives.

What I remember most is the cold and slush. We must have stood out in the cold and snow for over two hours leaning on our M-1s, which had their metal butt plates on the frozen ground before they formed us up for the parade. We were all wearing white cotton gloves, not our regular gray winter ones so our hands were frozen.

Finally our proud moment arrived and "Eyes Left" was ordered as we passed the President. As sharply as we could we executed the maneuver only to find Kennedy totally turned away from us chatting with Jackie or someone else.

Finally we finished and turned in our rifles. Our full dress uniforms soaking wet to the knees, our spit shined shoes destroyed, our collars wilted.

Some of us, including me, were somehow invited to one of the Inaugural Balls. I hardly remember it but had a date with a girl I had met at the Army-Navy Game a month earlier. Can't remember her name but she was beautiful and had the most fantastic blue velvet Gone With The Wind ball gown I ever saw. I looked like a wet rat in my drenched dress uniform from the inaugural parade.

Here's a neat video of a movie made when I was a plebe. I star as a tennis player: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mBbZn8epT-Y>

Anyway, I was this hotshot midshipman officer and the day before Christmas leave we decided to have a little party in my room. The alcohol flowed freely in violation of USNA and Maryland State law and about 13 of my classmates and me were caught by a Marine Major Officer of the Day. The good news was that there were too many of us "good guys" to throw out. The bad news was that we were restricted to quarters for 90 days. See [Appendix 3](#). I didn't realize until graduation that it also affected my class standing dropping me from the top twenty to number 99 of 850 graduates which still wasn't too bad.

[Return to Beginning](#)

Naval Academy Cruises

At the Naval Academy you didn't get three months off during the summer. You just got one month of leave during which you could go home or take additional training like Airborne parachute jumping or SEAL SCUBA classes. I went home and for the first time in my life didn't work. I played lots of tennis and became a pretty fair golfer.

The other two months of the summer were spent either on cruise or in aviation and Marine Corps training. The summer after my first year I was aboard the USS Macon, a WWII heavy cruiser. We were treated as enlisted sailors and did all of the heavy work like polishing brass and holy stoning the wooden decks. Also learned navigation and how to fire the massive 8" guns. It was on the Macon that naval gunfire deafened my right ear. We visited the ports of Quebec, Canada, Bermuda and Provincetown, MA.



Second Class summer we had Damage control/firefighting school in Philadelphia and Marine Corps training at Virginia Beach which included a full scale amphibious landing with gunfire and bombs. Learned to crawl through the mud under and over barbed wire with machine gun bullets ripping the air over my head. Great fun. On

amphibious landing day most of us had to go out the day before to the ships waiting offshore and wait in the rolling seas until the next morning. I was assigned to a helicopter squad so we spent the evening in the O'Club and casually boarded the helicopter the next morning, took a ten minute ride and assaulted the beach, walked up the sand and watched the rest of the operation from the viewing bleachers.



Remember fighting fires in that cramped compartment and wandering through a smoke filled building in Scott Air Packs? Once again great adventures for young men.



But the highlight was the USS Buttercup. This was an actual section from a heavy cruiser that was hinged to the seawall and could be

sunk by opening lots of holes in the hull. The plan was for us to use timbers, mattresses and portable pumps to stop the leaks and keep the ship afloat. Hazardous work in flooded compartments.

Well some genius in my section decided it would really put one over on the establishment to see if we could sink the good old Buttercup faster than it would on its own. This would have to be done in a sneaky manner so the instructors wouldn't have a clue.

The morning of the exercise arrived and we worked hard shoring up timbers and shoving mattresses in holes except we forgot to cover the biggest holes. Also we took the pumps and reversed the flow so we were pumping water into the sinking ship instead out. By Jove I think we succeeded and sank the ship in record time. We were so proud.

At the end of the exercise we were called to formation and told that we were in 'BIG TROUBLE'. Liberty was canceled and we were all to report to the smoke building at 1900. Well we thought it could have been worse. We marched to the smoke building expecting to don Scott Air Packs but were told that this time we'd do the walk though without them. Some grizzled old Chief with a cigar in his mouth slowly led us through while explaining the seriousness of our crimes. After we were all hacking, coughing and vomiting he finally released us to a night of restriction to quarters and warnings of what was to come. For unknown reasons that was the end of it and no further action was taken against us.

Actually it was a pretty light punishment from a humorless Navy.

The highlight of that summer was aviation training at Pensacola and Jacksonville. We learned to fly the T-34 Mentor and got to the point of doing all of the takeoffs and landings.



We also got an introduction to the T-28 Trojan which was a powerful trainer equivalent to a WWII fighter. The torque was strong on that plane.



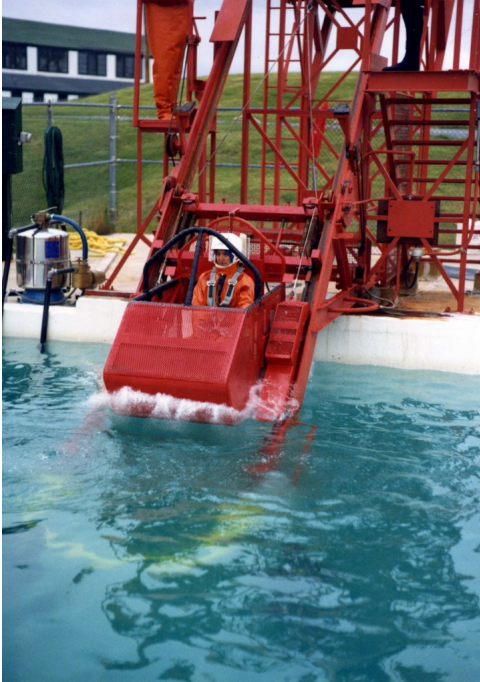
We learned basic flying skills and did a lot of rolls and loops and spins.

Finally at Pensacola we had a few hops on the T2J Buckeye, the basic jet trainer.



While at Pensacola I played tennis with the Admiral in searing heat. Afterward I returned to the barracks and took a drink of ice cold water. I felt a terrible pain in my chest and the next thing I knew I woke up jammed between the water cooler and the wall. I didn't understand what happened and didn't report to sick bay and felt okay, but this was probably the first manifestation of my heart problem that resulted in my discharge from the Navy a couple of years later.

Then it was over to Jacksonville where we got to fly the P2V Neptune antisubmarine aircraft and the R4D, the Navy version of the venerable DC3. What a great way to spend the summer. We also trained on the Dilbert Dunker, a diabolical machine that acts like a plane ditching in the ocean. It crashes into the water and flips over and you have to release your harness and escape before drowning.



My final cruise after my third year was on the aircraft carrier the USS Randolph. Now we were treated as junior officers and performed duties like Officer of the Deck, replenishment and Navigator. We visited Morocco, Sicily, Canne, France and Valencia, Spain. We got to fly off of the carrier and I controlled a helicopter in flight.

Photo # NH 67959 USS Randolph & USS Waller refueling from USS Pawcatuck



In Spain, a call came over the Randolph's PA system for any Naval Academy tennis players to report to the Flag bridge where the Admiral was. My teammate Lanny Cox and I promptly reported and were told we had a tennis match against the mayor of Valencia. I played with the Admiral and we won. Fun patting the Admiral on the ass with my tennis racket and saying, "Great shot, Sir." After the match the happy admiral invited us to a reception he was holding for the mayor that evening. We arrived at the appointed time in our dress uniforms only to be turned away at the door by the Flag Lieutenant who thought we were crashing the party. I told him he had better check with the Admiral, which he did. The Admiral came out drink in hand, put his arm around my shoulder and took me in and introduced me to everyone as his winning tennis partner.

On that cruise while returning across the Atlantic Ocean we ran through a hurricane and picture the Randolph taking green water over its flight deck which is normally sixty feet above the water. I went up to the bow and stood on the catwalk while the bow rose and fell. Just

before the water came rushing by I would duck into a hatch and slam it shut behind me. Not too smart in retrospect, but a real thrill ride!

[Return to Beginning](#)

While at USNA I was also a Rhodes Scholar nominee, but the liberal selection committee didn't choose me nor the number one man in our class, Dan Hennessy. Like I said I really loved that place and was prepared to have a long Navy career. Then things started unraveling. I flunked my flight physical because my hearing was damaged by naval gunfire back in 1960. My only choices after graduation were Supply Corps or Civil Engineer Corps. The CEC only took 10 graduates and guaranteed grad school, but I made the cut.

My Naval Academy yearbook entry:

"Steve, or 'Stevie B.," as we know him, entered the Naval Academy after graduating from high school in the land of mules and corn cob pipes, better known as Missouri. Steve never had time to be smoking the old corn cob pipe in Bancroft Hall, because he was too busy trying to beat the academic departments. Evidently, he found some degree of success in this endeavor, being constantly on the Superintendent's List and a wearer of "Stars". This he did without studying as much as the rest of us. Academics were not the only thing that came easily to Steve. Though small in stature, he was a fine athlete who lent his strong right arm to the varsity tennis team each year and excelled on the company basketball team during the winter months. The "Show-Me" state's contribution to the Navy has definitely shown us."

War in Vietnam

I attended the Naval Academy in a time of peace. World War II had ended in 1945. The Korean War was fought from 1950 until 1953 when I was just nine to twelve years old. So war and death were not on our minds the whole time I was at the Academy, but we were fully aware that we were being trained for combat. As I'll mention later my naval career was cut short by my heart problem in 1964. This was just before the Vietnam War heated up after the Gulf of Tonkin incident. Suddenly our peacetime navy was going to war and my classmates were thrown into it often hopelessly undertrained.

Thirteen of my classmates died for their country in Vietnam.

58,220 Americans died there. Here are statistics for losses from West Point, the Air Force Academy and Annapolis provided by my classmate Mike Cronin:

POWs- USNA 39, USAFA 33, USMA 9

A total of 591 POWs returned alive of a total of over 700 believed to have been POWs. Many of the MIAs were POWs who died in captivity before getting into contact with other POWs so that their names would be known by others as POWs and relayed to US authorities upon release or exchange of POWs. Some of these died of combat wounds shortly after capture and before reaching any POW camp, others were most likely shot while evading capture, and others died as a result of torture before other POWs knew of their presence. No one knows how many are in each of those categories. The Vietnamese aren't talking, but it is likely that quite few of those listed as MIAs actually died in captivity but were never known by the rest of us to have been captured

My personal belief is that there were never any MIAs alive and held by the Vietnamese after the war. The Vietnamese knew that we had spent great efforts to compile and memorize lists of names because they caught us doing so many times. To their great frustration, they

could never stop that or the communication that enabled it. They got everything they wanted in the Paris Accords of 1973- All US forces out of Vietnam and North Vietnamese forces permitted to remain in South Vietnam. The only way they could have blown the deal was to have been caught holding back prisoners. I just don't believe they were dumb enough to take that risk. The MIAs were actually KIAs. When the circumstances of a loss were not clear COs were most likely to list a loss as MIA. I was listed as "missing presumed captured

KIA- USNA 140, USAFA 150, USMA 267

Among the USNA KIAs the class date range was from '43 to '69
The class with the most KIAs was '66 with 16. 2nd was '63 with 13,
3rd was '62 with 12.

My Class of 1963 classmates who didn't return home from the war.

USNA CLASS OF 1963 ON THE WALL



JOHN WORCESTER
Panel 2E line 126



DON MACLAUGHLIN
Panel 4E - line 51



BILL FITZGERALD
Panel 24E - line 86



CARL DOUGHTIE
Panel 2E - line 4



KENNETH BUELL
Panel 1W - line 73



JAMES PATTERSON
Panel 20E - line 48



ALEXANDER PALENSCAR
Panel 17E - line 59



DAN MORAN
Panel 14E - line 36



CHUCK MARIK
Panel 8E - line 93



RICK TRANI
Panel 42W - line 24



SKIP TEMPLIN
Panel 4E - line 83



STANLEY SMILEY
Panel 20W - line 27



JERALD PINNEKER
Panel 6E - line 26

[Return to Beginning](#)

I was in my second year at the Naval Academy when Yuri Gagarin became the first man in space on April 12, 1961, followed a month later by Alan Shepard on May 5, 1961. All six Mercury flights including John Glenn's historic first U.S. orbital mission on February 20, 1962 occurred while I was still a student at the Academy.



The Gemini two-man program flights all occurred after I began working at the Kennedy Space Center in 1964, but since I was working on Apollo I had no part in Gemini. There were twelve manned Gemini flights in 1965 and 1966 paving the way for the Apollo program.



[Return to Beginning](#)

Meeting Yvonne

Cut back to June Week of 1962. I was offered the chance for a blind date with a Swedish girl.

I rejected it because I just didn't think I could handle Anita Ekberg. I invited Karin instead from back home. By this time Karin was just a great friend. I think she was going with Rick Clark a fellow high school tennis friend. We installed all of the girls in a vacation cabin in Sherwood Forest. The first time I drove up I saw this gorgeous blond standing on the porch and knew I had made a terrible mistake.



One of my buddies (who ended up spending years in the Hanoi Hilton) took the blind date. Karin and I had a good June Week and as the partying got going I danced and necked a little with Yvonne, but nothing really happened. When I went home on summer leave, Karin, bless her heart, mentioned that Yvonne liked me and that I should write her. I sent her a card with picture (so she'd know which midshipman I was) and to my great surprise she responded. After my

summer cruise I visited her in New York and we immediately fell in love and lust.



Yvonne came to the Naval Academy a couple of times, usually while I had a tennis match, I went to N.Y. a couple of times and she met my folks at the Army-Navy Game and then it was almost Christmas and her ticket expired so she went home.



Well as mentioned above I was on restriction so it was as well that she wasn't around. We corresponded almost daily and after only about six real dates got engaged by mail.

For interesting information about the social mores of the 1960s see Appendix 16, [The USNA Drag's Handbook](#).

[Return to Beginning](#)

Wedding and Early Married Life

I graduated from the Naval Academy on June 5, 1963 with a Bachelor of Science degree.

After graduation I hooked a hop to Europe and eventually got to Sweden. My flight over to Sweden after graduation was interesting. I went to Maguire AFB as a brand new Ensign to get a hop and what did I find but hoards of lowly USNA midshipmen with orders to fly to Europe for their cruises. Since I was space available I was at the bottom of the list (like now!). After waiting overnight one or two nights I got a call at the BOQ saying I could be a courier to Frankfurt. That sounded romantic. I reported to the hangar, picked up my .45 automatic and waited for them to chain a briefcase to my wrist. Instead I watched as they loaded a whole plane load of mail bags into some Canada Air swing nose four engine cargo plane. I signed my life away on page after page of manifests for custody of the load and away we went with me (and my pistol) the only passenger. We landed after twenty or so hours and I figured we were in Frankfurt but then I saw all these weirdly dressed men in striped gray trousers and dark suit jackets and bowlers and realized we were in London. Off came tons of "my" packages and I panicked saying "but, but, but...." I was told to cool it and sure enough when we got to Frankfurt they signed my papers telling me to keep them for five years just in case. So now I'm in Frankfurt with a thousand miles to get to Stockholm and no idea how to get there. Finally I got a train ticket to Copenhagen and then a plane the rest of the way to Stockholm. From the main airport I took a bus to an in town terminal and called Yvonne to come collect me. While waiting I looked out over a beautiful meadow. A car drove along a dirt road and stopped by a flowing brook. A young woman got out and stripped completely naked, spread a towel and layed down to sunbathe. I knew I had come to heaven.

We were unsure about getting married, but what the hell, the bridal gown was already borrowed so we decided to go ahead. We spent a glorious week on a Swedish resort island before the wedding and decided it would be immoral not to complete the deed. Her poor parents! Mine were thrilled I could get anyone.



Our wedding is still the talk of Sundbyberg, Sweden; dashing U.S. Naval officer and glamorous model. I had almost zero money but I did have a Phillips 66 credit card and a 1960 Ford. Yvonne paid for our DC-4 Icelandic flight to N.Y rather than risk the idiosyncrasies

of trying to get a hop. That took care of her money. We headed to Port Huemene, Ca for CEC school on love and nothing else.. God were we in love.... until I saw her eat fried chicken at a greasy spoon in Indiana with knife and fork using the wrong damn hands European style! That was our first and last fight. After I recovered from her beating, she explained that she'd do whatever the hell she wants! Once I learned this simple lesson, we've lived relatively happily ever after.

Well we ended up in Public Works at Lemoore Naval Air Station where all I did was play tennis, golf, squash and badminton with the senior officers and play at being Transportation Officer and Division Officer. The base was brand new so the facilities and quarters were nice and clean. There were a lot of challenges for our Public Works Department solving startup problems.

One of my assignments in 1964 was to design a pedestal to hold an A-4 Skyhawk near the entrance. After my Seabees completed the big concrete pedestal we mounted a Seabee statue on top of it and had a dedication ceremony. We didn't have the A-4 yet. They were phasing out the A-1 Skyraider at that time and during the ceremony the A-1 squadron flew over in formation and dropped leaflets. We picked them up and they paraphrased the old Tareyton cigarette commercial saying " We'd Rather Fight than Switch!"



Here's a A-1 Skyraider mounted on a similar pedestal.



As a newly commissioned Naval Academy grad I was often called upon for special assignments. Shortly after our arrival at Lemoore. I was called to the Base Commander, Captain Breen's office and told to prepare a speech for him on naval leadership. Then he called again to have me show him how to tie a mourning knot on his sword. We had swords at the Academy but not the knots so Commander Rumble and I rushed to the Navy Uniform Regulations and studied up on how to tie the knot. I went to the captain's office and acted like I did this every day. He was impressed.



The base was overrun with jackrabbits. Every night I had to tour all of the base's Pubic Works stations and I would see hundreds of these

critters. They were a big problem because they loved to gnaw on the electrical cables. Every so often we would organize a hunt. Sailors would be given shotguns and we would hike across the base blasting them.

My Publics Works commander, Commander Rumble was a sports nut and he and I would regularly go to the YMCA in Fresno to play squash. One day he told me that he and I were going to play in a big badminton tournament. Neither of us had ever played except at backyard picnics. About that time I got an engraved invitation to attend a fancy dinner with my wife hosted by the base commander. It was the same evening as the badminton tournament. I asked Commander Rumble what I should do and he said the tournament was more important. So I called the Executive Officer to cancel the dinner and he said it must have been a mistake anyway for a lowly ensign to be invited and to not worry about it. So we played badminton instead and saw what a hard sport it is, but we won second place anyway since I had basic racket skills. The following Monday. Commander Rumble got a tongue lashing from Captain Breen asking where the hell was Ensign Coester. I seems that the party was in honor of some Norwegian naval officers and he wanted my lovely Scandinavian wife there to converse with the Norwegians.

Yvonne got pregnant after three months instead of three years of marriage after a wonderful day at Disneyland where we danced to the Glen Miller orchestra and apparently got "In the Mood." We spent lots of time hiking in Sequoia and Yosemite and life was a dream as newly weds. Yvonne was ogled by all the officers and I was the current Naval Academy grad in a then very "club" oriented Navy.

A big celebration at the Lemoore O'club was planned for Yvonne's 21st birthday which was abruptly canceled when President Kennedy was assassinated on her day, November 22, 1963.

One day I was in the dentist office for a routine exam and my heart felt funny. I went home and pretty soon I was faint and disabled. Yvonne took me to the dispensary and they told her I was dying; and

she was 8 months pregnant in a strange land! It turned out I had had Wolff-Parkinson-White syndrome since birth and it decided to cause fibrillation at that time. Since then I've had about four other "near death" experiences including the paddles, but I never saw the bright white light. In 1998 I had a brand new procedure where they insert three catheters into the heart, map out the bad nerve bundles and burn them out. I've been fine ever since. Obviously I didn't die, but my cherished naval career was over. While they were in the process of discharging me from the Navy, I won the 12th Naval District Doubles title and took second in singles. Dean was born 5-21-64 in Lemoore NAS hospital. His daughter, Kristen, was born there Valentine Day, 1993. Then Nick was also born at Lemoore in 1997. Three Coesters born in the same rinky-dink Navy hospital. To my never-ending regret I was out playing tennis when Dean was born. Yvonne brings that up now and again.

Also I started getting arthritis in my hands and feet at about twenty-two which eventually has lead to pretty bad disfigurement of the hands and the end of a stunningly unspectacular tennis career until I resumed playing when I turned sixty-two. I pretty much quit playing at 35 after always being number two or three in our area.

What was a 22-year-old to do now? I thought of Tennis Pro, Forest Ranger, etc., but got practical and started applying for engineering jobs. We also decided to go cross-country to Florida where Mom and Dad were living since the Navy would pay for the trip. So dog, cat, 3 month old Dean and four-year-old Ford headed East. We purchased a Coleman stove for the trip that we still use on our camping trips. Mom and Dad were living in a luxury home with no furniture, having been swindled out of all their money by a con man that found my Dad an easy mark. He never recovered from that experience and the last 25 years of his life were pretty shabby.

[Return to Beginning](#)

The NASA Years



Apollo

I got a job with Boeing at KSC on the Apollo-Saturn V program paying \$10000 a year, which included "swamp pay" for living in an uncivilized region. I knew I wanted to be one of those directly involved in the launches. I got transferred from a support job to a test engineer position in the Liquid Hydrogen facility and participated in all the Apollo launches in the Firing Room. Now, years later I realize what an achievement those flights were; Apollo 8, Apollo 11, and Apollo 13 and all the other moon missions and Skylab. Overall on Apollo I helped launch twelve Apollo-Saturn V, one Skylab-Saturn V and three Skylab-Saturn 1B missions. (One hundred and fifteen total launches adding in Atlas-Centaur and Space Shuttle)

While working on Apollo I also attended night school and received my Masters of Business Degree from Florida State University in 1972.

See [Appendix 4](#) for my Apollo 11 tale of how I helped avert a launch scrub after a serious hydrogen leak on the launch tower on July 16, 1969 the day Armstrong, Aldrin and Collins lifted off for the moon. after a serious hydrogen leak on the launch tower.



The Boeing Fuels Group



My "home" during the Apollo program. We had office trailers next to the tank. We also had real offices in the Vehicle assembly Building (VAB) but didn't spend much time there.



Here's a photo of me on the S-IVB liquid hydrogen loading console on launch day for Apollo 8. I'm the second one in.

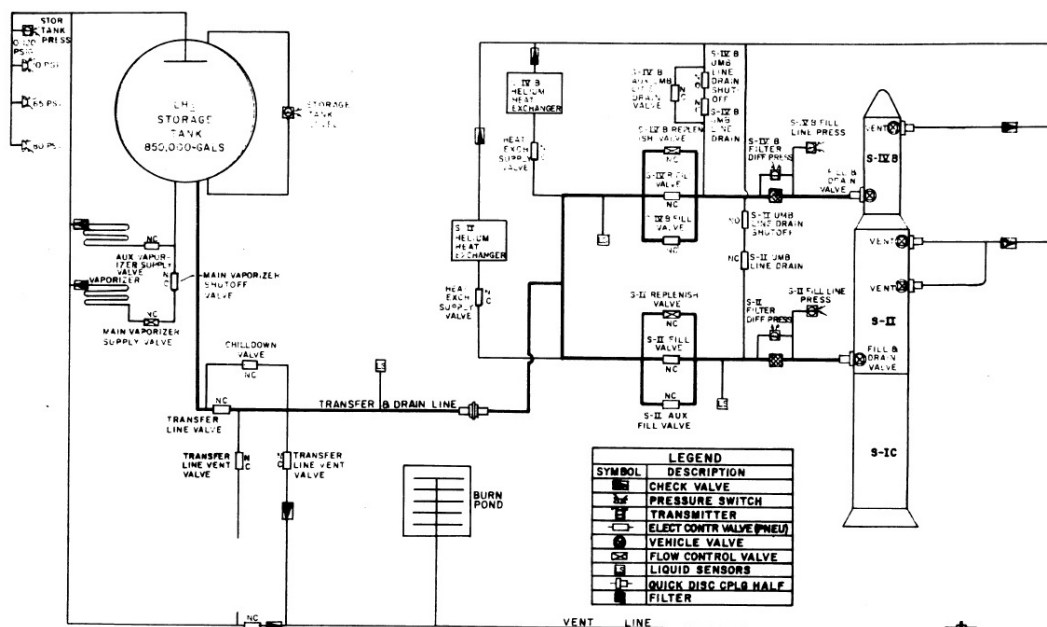
See [Appendix 18](#) for our LH2 Firing Room consoles.

Some of my Firing room badges for Apollo 11 and 13.





Here's a description of the liquid hydrogen system:



The system I worked in was the Saturn V Fuels group. We were responsible for loading 209,000 gallons of RP-1 (kerosine) on the S-1C first stage and 320,000 gallons of -423 degree liquid hydrogen on the second and third stages (S-II and S-IVB).

The LH2 system included a 850000 gallon vacuum jacketed LH2 storage tank. Propellant transfer was caused by pressurizing the tank to sixty psi by flowing some liquid hydrogen through a large heat exchanger or vaporizer. This pressure provided a 10000 gallon per minute flow rate.

The liquid hydrogen was expelled from the tank and traveled 1500 feet across the pad and 200 feet up the launch tower into the launch vehicle.

The ten inch diameter transfer lines were also vacuum jacketed in forty foot sections and it is said that an ice cube placed in one of the lines would take three months to melt.

The tank had a manual valve leading to the transfer line and another going to the vaporizer. The vaporizer had a valve controlled by an analog pressure controller that automatically maintained the tank pressure at 60 psi during operation. In the storage area there were a pneumatically operated chill down valve to condition the lines and vehicle tanks and a large 10" valve for main transfer. These valves were controlled from the firing room using 750 psi helium through small electrical solenoid valves.

Several manual valves, regulators and flowmeters provided purges which could be switched from nitrogen to helium.

On the 120 and 200 foot levels were valve skids just upstream of the Saturn V with valves to control flow and replenish to the stages. Also there were two vent systems, one for the supply piping and one for boil off from the vehicle. These pipes ran down the side of the launch tower and across the pad to a one hundred foot square burn pond.

where the excess hydrogen was burned safely through over a thousand bubble caps.

Electrical feedbacks provided valve position data in the firing room and several pressure, temperature and hydrogen leak detectors gave system status.

[Return to Beginning](#)

Atlas-Centaur



After Apollo NASA nearly disappeared. I was lucky to get a job with General Dynamics launching Atlas-Centaur unmanned rockets

at \$16000 a year where I handled the pneumatic systems for about 35 missions and 5 years. We put up all of the communications satellites. I helped launch about fifteen Atlas-Centaurs

The Centaur Pneumatic group that I was responsible for was responsible for loading the Centaur flight helium tanks with 4000 psi helium. We also were responsible to build up the T-4 disconnect plate that provided ground commodities to the Centaur stage. And the liquid hydrogen vent system had to be assembled after the stage was erected by my technicians..

The Centaur LO2 and LH2 tanks shared a common bulkhead. This bulkhead had to prevent heat transfer from the -423 hydrogen tank to the -297 oxygen tank. Therefore it was also vacuum jacketed and one of our major tasks was to evacuate the bulkhead and check for leaks. This is covered more in detail in my Space Stories appendix.

There is more about Centaur in my Space Stories at [Centaur](#) .

[Return to Beginning](#)

Space Shuttle

I thought I saw the light after the successful Shuttle landing tests when they said all unmanned rockets would be phased out and went to work for Rockwell first as lead engineer and then as Supervisor of the Space Shuttle Main Propulsion System. They are still launching Atlas-Centaurs. By this time I was earning about \$30000 a year and by retirement nineteen years late inflation had booted it up to about \$80000.



I've been well paid and well rewarded with two President's Awards, the NASA HQ Manned Flight Safety Award for averting a potential disaster, and other peachy keen awards. I worked too long hours and missed out on a lot of the kids' growing up. I'm proud to have been the MPS supervisor and that I headed the propulsion team in the Launch Control Center Firing room for the very first Space Shuttle launch of Columbia on STS-1. None of us really knew if we were truly ready for this launch. We had done everything we could to make sure the hardware, procedures and software were ready but until T-0 we couldn't know for sure. For months beforehand I had nightmares of Columbia lifting off the launch pad, rising a few hundred feet and then nose diving into the flame trench. What a relief to get it successfully off the ground. Bless our designers out in Downey who gave us a great piece of hardware! I'm proud to have been the one who said, "MPS Go!" for this historic mission.

After about five years, NASA awarded the Shuttle processing contract to Lockheed and I decided to stay with Rockwell, which reduced their force from 5000 to about 200. I was a System Specialist (kind of a Maytag Repairman) advising on the Main Propulsion System until I retired in 1997. I helped launch eight-four Shuttle missions.

The Challenger disaster is my personal work low point and diminished the glamour of the job for me. Thank God it wasn't my system that failed.

I've rubbed elbows with astronauts John Young, Bob Crippen and the others.

See [Appendix 5](#) for my feelings after the Challenger disaster.

I've recorded several "Space memories" at [Appendix 6](#). These stories expand on my career on all three programs and some are pretty weird or hilarious.

Here's a story of how I was awarded a very high NASA Award for detecting and repairing a potential disaster.. See [Appendix 7](#).



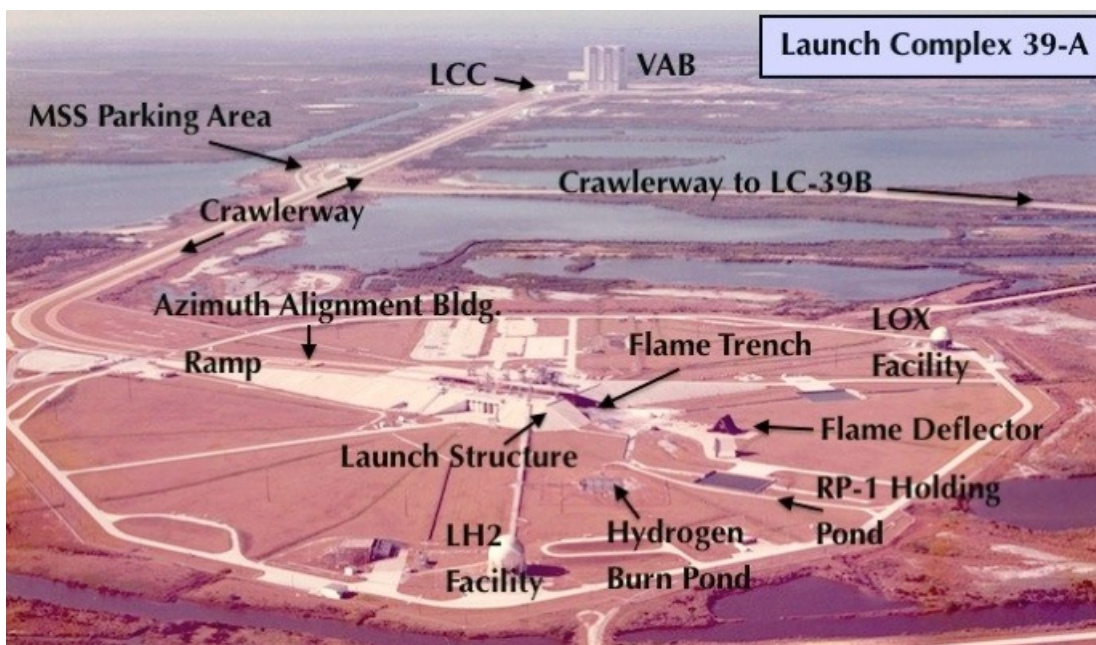
Space Shuttle Main Engine installation.



Space Shuttle Aft Fuselage and MPS System



Here's a good shot of The KSC Launch Control Center with the huge VAB to the right and the very first Space Shuttle. It is rolling out to the launch pad, LC-39A shown in the next photo.





Me receiving the Silver Snoopy, the astronaut's personal award, from Jim Newman.

I also received two Rockwell International President's Awards. These were good ones because they came with a \$5000 prize.

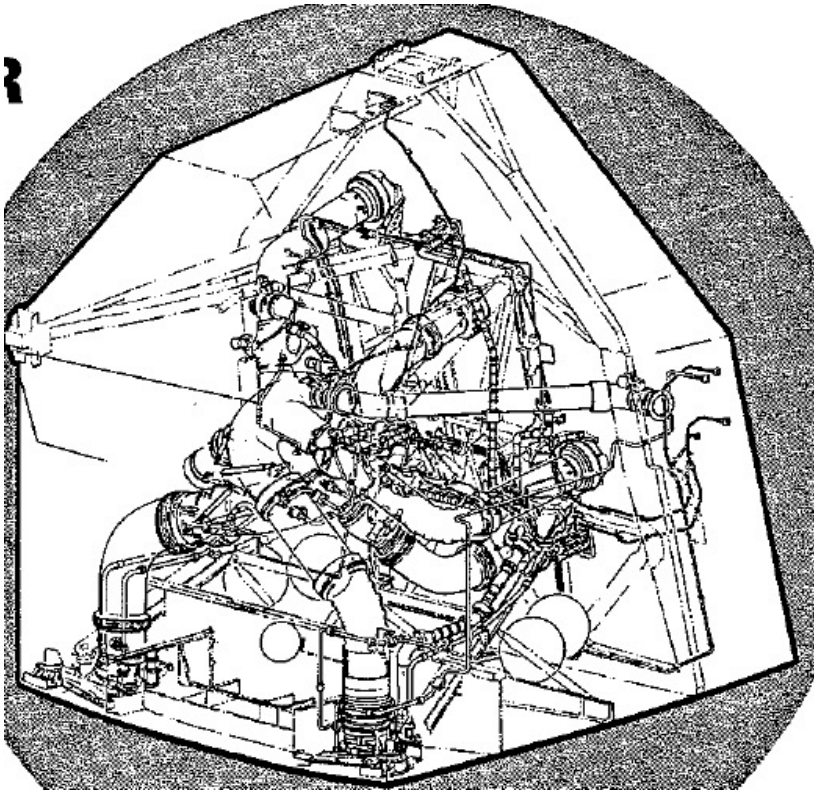




Astronaut John Young who flew on Gemini, Apollo and the first Space Shuttle and me.

John Young joined NASA in 1962 when I was still at the Naval Academy. While he was flying Gemini 3 in 1965 and Gemini 10 in 1966, I was across the river at Launch Complex 39 preparing for future Saturn V launches. I was present and helped for both of Young's Apollo missions. I first met John before the first Space Shuttle mission when I'd be performing Main Propulsion testing in the firing room and John would wander in totally alone. He would sit down at my console and ask me about how the SSME main engine testing was going at the Mississippi Test Facility (MTF). He was understandably concerned because we still didn't have certified engines to put on Columbia. Finally they conducted a successful full duration 533 second firing and certified the engines for his and Bob Crippen's launch. As the Shuttle program progressed I would see him at several Propulsion System Integration Group (PSIG) meetings and later at Shuttle-Centaur planning meetings, a program neither of us thought much of. Then Yvonne and I met him at a few Apollo anniversary dinners and he was always very cordial. Finally, one day I got a call from my fighter pilot son who was in Atlanta airport ready room when this fairly elderly blue-suiter walked in. Dean approached him and introduced himself. John said, "Oh, you must be Steve Coester's son." Impressed my son.

The Space Shuttle Main Propulsion System



The Space Shuttle Main Propulsion System provides the piping and valves to permit loading of the External Tank with liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen from the ground storage tanks and at liftoff to provide the flow path from the External Tank to the three Space Shuttle Main Engines (SSME). The liquid hydrogen piping is vacuum jacketed and the liquid oxygen piping is foam insulated. The fill line is 8", the SSME feed lines are 12" and the ET lines are 17" in diameter. The propellant came from the same system I described in the Apollo section.

There are twenty-two pneumatically activated valves in the main feed and replenish systems and about a hundred electrical helium solenoid valves to control those main valves and provide helium purges/pressurization.

Three recirculation pumps take liquid hydrogen from the feed system and route it through the SSMEs prior to launch to chill down the engines.

Flow control valves take 3000 psi pressure from the engines during flight and route that gas to the top of the External Tank to maintain a positive ullage head pressure on the tanks during engine operation.

MPS was responsible for four regulator panels that reduced the 4400 psi helium tank pressure to 750 psi operating pressure for valve actuation and purges.

Pressure from ground helium tanks flowed into our ten large 4.7 cu-ft and 17.3 cu-ft helium spheres which were pressurized to 4400 psi to provide all the helium required during the flight.

A Gaseous Nitrogen system was provided to purge the main engines prior to ignition.

Hundred of commands and feedbacks were routed from the Shuttle's General Purpose Computers and operated from the Launch Control center. Also hundreds of items of instrumentation provided system status.

I'm often asked what my job actually consisted of at the space center. Here's a description I wrote to a friend:

The job of test engineer actually goes on every day, not just on launch day. We would get a set of design requirements for our system from the designers, then we'd prepare the test procedures and computer programs to verify the intent of the requirements. And we'd help to refine or expand the requirements. Then the test engineer operates the test computer console and supervises the technicians in performing the tests. Then he analyzes the data, prepares troubleshooting and repair documentation and starts the cycle again. He also diagnoses test and in flight anomalies.

Besides the test function the test engineer works with the Test Conductor to prepare his systems operations during integrated tests on the whole vehicle including integrated leak checks, electrical tests, propellant tanking test, and launch countdown. The System level

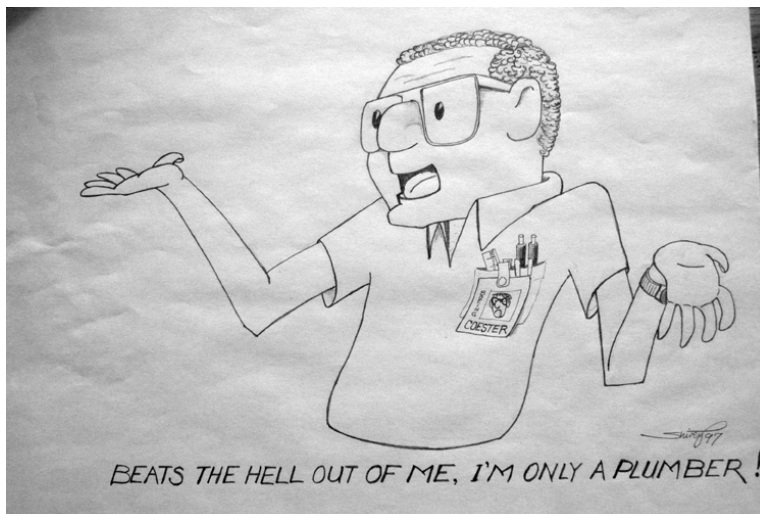
requirements document for my system, Main Propulsion, ran about 600 pages of single line requirements, and the integrated test requirement document ran about 1000 pages. Each requirement then has a procedure written to verify it and any computer programs required to perform the test. I'd guess the test procedures for Main Prop totaled about 20000 pages and over 100 procedure documents. and we had a couple of hundred computer programs to perform anything from a simple electrical redundancy test to the totally automated LH2 and LO2 propellant tankings or the SSME flight readiness test which dry fires the engine through all of its prelaunch and ascent operations. Early in the Program I prepared a good portion of all that documentation and developed and ran most of the tests. Then I was bumped up into supervision and finally was a godlike Specialist like the Maytag repairman where I just waved my magic wand and problems miraculously disappeared. spent a lot of time in management meetings explaining why or why not the MPS would work and why things kept crapping out.

Anyway to answer your question as to what I did during the launch countdown, I was in the Firing Room or Blockhouse for all of my 115 launches including the Apollo moon shots, Skylab, Mars Voyagers, Communication satellites on Atlas Centaur, and The Shuttle launches. The propellant tanking is the main event of the last eight hours of the countdown and that was one of the areas of my expertise. Early in my career I'd be operating a launch console that tanked LH2, or loaded helium, or controlled the engines. As I progressed I sat behind the console operators and supervised them, and finally I merely sat and answered questions whenever a Main Propulsion problem arose or concurred with other's troubleshooting plans. I'd be expected to know all the thousands of things that could go wrong and instantly after a night without sleep come up with the way to solve a ten hour problem in ten minutes. My usual response was "beats the shit out of me!" At T-9 minutes I'd give a "Go" or "no go" for the system based on yet another multi hundred page launch commit criteria document of instrumentation redlines and system performance. It takes a certain personality to stand up and say no go knowing you just scrubbed a launch attempt. You'd better be right. During ascent we had no control of events, but we'd monitor all the parameters so that we'd have a heads up of any problems that

could affect vehicle or crew safety or that we'd have to fix upon landing. Occasionally we'd coordinate with Houston to have the astronauts perform some on orbit functions to stabilize a problem such as a propellant leak. If a launch went perfectly smoothly I might not be called on to say a word, but usually we could find plenty to talk about since operating with fluids at negative 423 degrees F, pressures up to 8000 psi and gas temps up to a 6000 thousand degrees tended to stress the equipment quite a bit.

Leaks, fires, and instrumentation failures were the usual.

The three Shuttle Main Engines put out 1 1/2 million pounds of thrust and total liftoff thrust is 7 million pounds, as opposed to maybe 100000 for an airliner. We use about 25000 gallons of fuel/oxidizer per minute.



My standard answer to any technical question

For more on Space Shuttle see [Shuttle](#).

Amazing Space Shuttle Facts

The space shuttle has more than 2,500,000 parts, including about 170 miles of wire, more than 1,060 plumbing valves and connections, about 1,440 circuit breakers, and more than 24,000 insulating tiles and thermal blankets. It is the most complex machine ever built.

Although it weighs more than 4,500,000 lb at launch, the space shuttle accelerates from zero to about nine times as fast as a rifle bullet, or more than 17,500 mph, to attain Earth orbit in less than nine minutes, during which time more than 3,500,000 lb of propellants are

completely consumed. The shuttle breaks the sound barrier 52 seconds into flight.

The orbiter, both the brains and heart of the Space Transportation System, is about the same size as a Boeing 737 aircraft. The cargo bay measures 60 feet by 15 feet in diameter and can carry cargo up to 65,000 lb.

The shuttle's 24,000 individual tiles are made primarily of pure sand silicate fibers, mixed with a ceramic binder. Incredibly lightweight and about the same density as balsa wood, they dissipate the heat so quickly that a white-hot tile with a temperature of 2,300°F can be taken from an oven and held in bare hands without injury.

Two orbital maneuvering system (OMS) engines, mounted on either side of the upper aft fuselage, provide thrust for major orbital changes. For more exacting motions in orbit, 44 small rocket engines, clustered on the shuttle's nose and on either side of the tail, are used. Together, they are known as the reaction control system.

Temperatures experienced by the space shuttle range from as low as -250°F in space to as high as 3,000°F during re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere while traveling more than 17,000 mph.

At 149-feet, 1.6-inches tall, the solid rocket booster is only two feet shorter than the Statue of Liberty, but each 700-ton loaded booster weighs more than three times as much as the famous statue. The SRBs, which burn solid propellant, provide more than 83 percent of the space shuttle's thrust during the first two minutes of ascent. The two SRBs generate a combined thrust of 5.3 million lb, equivalent to 44 million horsepower.

The 15-story-tall, rust-colored external tank is the only shuttle element that isn't reused. Despite its size, the aluminum skin of the tank is only 0.125-inch thick in most areas. It feeds more than 500,000 gallons of fuel to the shuttle's main engines during launch at the rate of more than 1,000 gallons per second.

If the shuttle main engines pumped water instead of fuel, they would drain an average-size swimming pool in 25 seconds.

SSME Incredible Facts

The SSME operates under temperatures ranging from -423° Fahrenheit to +6000° Fahrenheit.

The maximum equivalent horsepower created by the three SSMEs is just over 37,000,000 horsepower.

The energy released by three SSMEs is equivalent to the output of 13 Hoover Dams.

Although not much larger than an automobile engine, the SSME high-pressure fuel turbopump generates 100 horsepower for each pound of its weight, while an automobile engine generates about one-half horsepower for each pound of its weight.

Even though the SSME weighs one-seventh as much as a locomotive engine, its high-pressure fuel pump alone delivers as much horsepower as 28 locomotives, while its high-pressure oxidizer pump delivers the equivalent horsepower for 11 more.

If water, instead of fuel, were pumped by the three Space Shuttle Main Engines, an average family-sized swimming pool could be drained in 25 seconds.

The SSME high-pressure fuel turbopump main shaft rotates at 37,000 rpm compared to about 3,000 rpm for an automobile operating at 60 mph.

The discharge pressure of an SSME high-pressure fuel turbopump could send a column of liquid hydrogen 36 miles in the air.

[Return to Beginning](#)

SCUBA Diving Tales

In July 1966 Yvette was born in Rockledge at Wuesthoff Hospital. We got involved in SCUBA in 1967 and it consumed our time and money for 25 years. We've traveled the Caribbean, Mexico and Central America diving and the kids became fish. For \$27 per person we could have a three day dive trip to the Bahamas including food and air.





On my very first trip to Bimini, I joined two other buddies thinking they were well experienced. When I got certified tanks didn't have pressure gauges and there were no dive computers. You had to keep track of your time and depth. We dove and I continuously was looking at my watch eventually wondering why these guys weren't surfacing and why we kept getting farther from the anchored boat. Eventually we all surfaced only to find ourselves almost out of sight of the boat. We started swimming on the surface, which is something you really don't want to do with a tank hanging on your back. It took us forty minutes to finally get back totally exhausted. Right then I decided that I wasn't going to put my trust in anyone but me.

Another time in the Bahamas, the sea was totally flat and it was really hot. We all wanted to get wet. Finally we anchored in a promising spot and threw out our safety line. One diver jumped overboard and was immediately swept toward the stern and only the safety line saved him from being swept away. I still wanted to dive and figured if we jumped off the bow and grabbed the anchor line we could work our way down to the bottom. One other brave soul decided to join me and in we went. We grabbed the anchor line and started pulling ourselves the sixty feet to the bottom. The current was so strong it was depressing the purge button on our regulators making us lose air at an abnormal rate. Finally we arrived at the bottom already tired from the hard work getting there. At the bottom the current was actually much less and we both shot a couple of fish. We knew to

stay close to the anchor line because that's how we were going to have to ascend. Quickly we were down to our minimum safe amount of air so I tapped the other fellow on the shoulder and pointed upwards. I turned totally around and couldn't find the anchor or its rope. Totally confused we headed for the surface and when we got there the boat was gone. What the heck had happened? Riding up on a wave I finally spotted our boat way off in the distance. We started swimming and found the going pretty easy with the strong current. After a scary forty minutes we finally got back to the boat, which had re-anchored after they realized that the boat was moving. What had happened was the current was so strong it actually bent the flukes on the forty pound Danforth anchor in half causing it to release from the bottom. Another close call. Here's a Danforth anchor



Another time we were diving off of Chub Cay in the Bahamas on a bare boat charter out of Miami. We were on a wonderful dive when suddenly I noticed a female diver in distress. I swam toward her as she floated to the surface unresponsive. One of us immediately started CPR breathing which isn't easy in the ocean. We got her over to the boat and were faced with the problem of getting her onboard. The freeboard of the Shark VI sailboat was about four feet, which was too far to just lift her. We rigged a line around her limp body and finally got her aboard. Our captain's wife Jeri Dufresne and I resumed CPR alternating with one of us doing chest compressions and the other breathing into her mouth. The boat immediately headed for Nassau, which was two hours away. All that time we continued CPR never getting any response. The breathing was a messy job with vomit and blood coming from her mouth. Finally we arrived in Nassau where medics took over only to pronounce her dead. I never found out the cause of death but suspect an air embolism from ascending too fast from the depths. For about a month I had pain in my mouth from severely bruised lips where I had pressed down on

hers. At night the pain would give me nightmares from reliving that terrible day.

See [Appendix 9-12](#) for some more of my SCUBA stories

We also camped a lot because it was cheap (\$3) and I could pretend I was still in Boy Scouts. Remember Order of the Arrow?

[Return to Beginning](#)

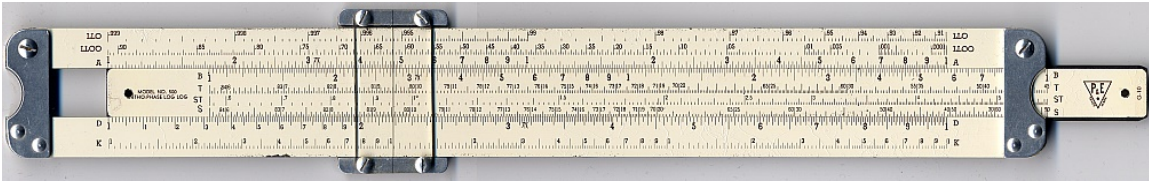
1960's Technology

This is a good place to mention computers. It was not until 1985 several years into the Space Shuttle that we got our first Macintosh (Apple) desktop computers at work. It had 128 kilobytes of storage and all input was done using 3" discs.



I was forty-four years old then. Up to that time all work was done handwritten with pen and paper. NASA had big main frame computers to control operations during the Apollo program. Handheld electronic calculators didn't arrive until around 1967 and my first one could just add, subtract, multiply and divide and cost \$400. In college

and during Apollo all calculations were done using a slide rule and mechanical drawings were done by hand by skilled draftsmen.



The Space Shuttle program was the first NASA program to use a computerized firing room. We test engineers hand wrote all of the programs to control our test and launch consoles on big green "IBM" sheets and then keypunch operators would transform those sheets into punch cards that would feed the computers and eventually end up on giant tape reels in the firing room.



Space Shuttle Firing Room

Over the next thirty years computer technology increased tremendously through desktop computers, laptops and tablets with storage up in the gigabytes.



My current desktop Apple.

When I was young telephones looked like this.



In fact the ones just before this had no dial and when you picked up the receiver a human operator would ask "number please" and would manually connect the call. It wasn't uncommon to see these hanging on the wall in corner markets.



Push button phones came about in the 1960s and wireless phones in the 1970s. Cell phones became popular around 1990. Here's 2017 iPhone.



[Return to Beginning](#)

Life in Rockledge, Florida

In 1964 we bought our home at 947 Barbara Lane in Rockledge, FL for \$16400 with air conditioning. We added a garage, a "new room", a screen porch, a shed and a swimming pool. Have lived there to the present through two kids, three grandkids, three dogs innumerable cats, numerous appliances and A/C units, and about five hurricanes.



Cars, we've had too many to count from around \$1600 in 1963 up to \$43000. Inflation!

My favorite was my 1984 Nissan 300Z sports car that I end up sinking in a KSC canal in heavy fog. As the cart was slowly sinking, I raised the rear hatch, climbed over the seat and stepped out onto dry land.

Didn't even get my feet wet. A KSC rent-a-cop gave me a ticket for reckless driving which I fought in court and won after the cop told the judge he had "read me my rights", which certainly wasn't appropriate in a traffic case.

Yvonne's favorite was our '65 Mustang, white with baby blue interior.



Here's our most modern car in 2017. It is a 2013 Infiniti G37. The two of us also own a 1998 Lexus and a 2007 Ford Edge.



[Return to Beginning](#)

The Children and Grandchildren



Dean was born May 21, 1964 at NAS Lemoore Naval Hospital. He was raised in Rockledge, FL where he was an outstanding student and played trumpet in the high school band. He was the keeper on the district champion school soccer team. Dean attended the University of Florida on a NROTC scholarship and graduated with an Aerospace Engineering degree. After college he was a Naval Aviator flying the FA-18 fighter jet. He married Kathy Bishop but that didn't work out but did produce Kristen and Nickolas. After the Navy he flew for United Airlines.



Yvette was born at Wuesthoff Hospital in Rockledge on July 6, 1966. Yvette also did well in school and was also a fine musician playing the clarinet and flute. He was an exceptional gymnast and as a child wore out our carpet doing thousands of cartwheels. Later she taught gymnastics. She attended Brevard Community College and received her degree as a Registered Nurse. Her son is Stephen Miller.

The Grandchildren



Stephen Miller was born at the birthing center on Merritt Island January 13, 1992. He has grown up near us in Rockledge, Fl. Stephen has always been personable, intelligent and a fine athlete excelling in every sport. He played high school soccer and was #1 on the school tennis team. When he was seven years old his father Bodie was injured in a motorcycle accident and became a paraplegic. Therefore I took over many of the fatherly duties for raising Stephen. He also had a motorcycle and rode motocross until he injured his arm and shoulder. Stephen graduated from Rockledge High with honors and got his college degree from the University of Central Florida. He is pursuing an advanced medical degree.



Kristen Coester was born February 14, 1993 at NAS Lemoore Hospital. She was raised in Beeville, Texas. Kristen has it all. She is beautiful, extremely smart, a talented artist in many media, played #1 on her school tennis team and is now a certified yoga instructor. Kristen has done modeling work. She graduated from Texas State University in 2016 with a dual degree in psychology and art.



Nick Coester, our youngest grandchild was also born at NAS Lemoore Hospital on January 10, 1997. Nick was raised in Beeville, TX. He was always small for his age until he suddenly spurted up to about 6' 3" at the end of high school. Nick excelled at Pettis High School and is a member of the National Honor Society. As a small child Nick was very introspective enjoying playing with his model cars and video games. In high school he expanded his horizons and became a star on the football team. He is presently attending Texas State University in San Marcos studying business and enjoying college life as a "frat boy".

[Return to Beginning](#)

Our Pets

Soon after Yvonne and I were married and had moved to NAS Lemoore, she came home with our first dog. Moofie was the cutest little fur ball ever. He looked exactly like a border collie but a mixed breed about half size.



Moofie was mad about tennis balls and would play throw and fetch endlessly. One time I threw the ball high into the air fifty times and he caught it before it hit the ground every time. We let Moofie run free

and he fathered little copies of him all over Rockledge. He lived fifteen good years and was the best dog ever.

After Moofie died Yvonne decided she would finally get the cocker spaniel she had always wanted. She and the kids bought Queen Silvia AKA Lucky. Lucky's claim to fame was she could sing beautifully and you could get her howling in tune to any song.



My brother had a work assignment in Granada and couldn't take their dog so we inherited Benji for a year. Here's Benji and Lucky together.



Benji was the best dog and we couldn't believe it when after a year they came back and wanted their dog. We shed some tears when he left us.

Lucky only lived about eight years so we got another cocker, a boy named Buffett. Here's Buffett along with one of our many cats, Flannel.



Buffett also had a short eight years and we thought we were done with dogs. Yvonne babysat a friend's dog and while the friend was on a trip she had a terrible stroke and we ended up with Snuffy for nine months. After her recovery Snuffy didn't want to go back to her

so we kept him for many years until he finally died at age fifteen. Snuffy was a wonderful dog.



We then got the friend another pet, Nalle and we took care of him so often he was almost our dog.



Yvonne raised cats for years so there are too many to count. Chang was our first of many Siamese cats in Lemoore. He was very protective of us and visitors had to use caution.

Twinkle was half Siamese His specialty was attacking your legs as you walked by.



We had a huge Siamese named Cocoa. Yvette would baby him and roll him around in a baby carriage.



Puff was one of Yvonne's breeders and a beautiful Persian.



Flannel and
Sable lived with us for about Twenty years and were never apart..



We also had Gligi, Pumpkin and many others.



Now we have Rusty. Rusty was a feral cat who hung around our neighborhood. One day he decided to come in the house and over many months became our lover cat. He has the clipped left ear of a captured and neutered feral cat.



[Return to Beginning](#)

Skiing Adventures

In our senior years we started skiing at fifty and did that all over the West and Canada for fifteen years.



I became a good but not expert skier, comfortable on groomed expert slopes. Here's one story of when I didn't do so well:

I had one harrowing experience on our second day at Brighton. Somehow we got off on a double black diamond, never groomed run. These are for hardcore experts only which I ain't. I made a turn at the top of the hill, fell, flipped, lost both skis and one pole. Then I started sliding headfirst down the hill over rocks and past trees having no idea where I was headed. I do wear a helmet which was a good idea at the time. Finally I got turned around so I was sliding more or less feet first. I was grapping at trees, grass and whatever, but just kept on sliding. Then I almost came to a halt and breathed a sigh of relief and shifted a little and off I went again. This time I disappeared over a small cliff although I don't really remember that. Eventually I stopped and looked up and down the hill. At the bottom of the little cliff was a massive boulder, which I must of just missed since I was

completely unhurt but terribly scared. And I was only about two thirds of the way down with the other third still to go. My brother and nephew couldn't see me after I went over the crest to where I came to rest and were sure I was dead or badly hurt. My nephew's number one thought was, "What are we going to tell Aunt Yvonne." Eventually he made it down to me and I was afraid to stand up for fear of starting to slide again. After several long breaths I stood and started wondering about skis, poles, etc., which were way up the hill. My faithful brother was trying to bring them down but carrying them made it too difficult for him so he fell multiple times, but fortunately didn't slide. I started gingerly stepping down the slope one tiny step at a time. Then fate intervened and the Snow Patrol showed up doing an exercise lowering a stretcher down the hill. They relieved the skis from my brother and came down to me with them. They seemed amazed to find me unhurt and estimated my slide over this rough terrain to be at least 600 feet. The Patrol coaxed me back into my skis which I wasn't feeling too thrilled about and guided me like the beginner I was feeling like across the slope in gentle traverses. I was really shaky. My only injury was a little scrape on my face where my goggles disassembled and the lens scraped me a bit. I then had to decide whether to give up skiing and take up knitting, but my arthritic hands wouldn't hold the needles so I went back up the lift and skied another few runs to get my confidence back up. Yvonne correctly says I never could follow the arrows to the right hills and I proved the hell out of that. I was more careful to ski within my limits after that skiing mostly Blue intermediate slopes with a few groomed Blacks thrown in for good measure.

[Return to Beginning](#)

And I returned to tennis at sixty-two and am still doing well in old man leagues.



Also in my retirement I took up wildlife photography, taking photos mainly of the birds at the Viera wetlands just south of our Rockledge home. I share these on Facebook and by email with several hundred interested people.

About once a month I take visitors, friends or family out to the Kennedy Space Center and give them a personalized tour benefiting them with my launch experiences from thirty-three years working there.



A 2017 visit to the Space Center with Naval Academy classmates and astronaut Bob Springer.

[Return to Beginning](#)

For our 50th Wedding Anniversary story see [Appendix 8](#)

I also have another bio on my Naval Academy class page at [Appendix 17.](#)

Here's a story about watching Dean flying off the USS Carl Vinson in 1994. See [Appendix 14](#)



**In the air on 9-11, September 11, 2001. We were flying from Orlando to San Francisco when terrorists hit the NYC Twin Towers. See [Appendix 15](#).
[Return to Beginning](#)**

Our Travels

During our whole lives Yvonne and I have been fortunate to be able to travel. Growing up in Sweden, Yvonne visited England when she was fourteen and met Barbara McCabe who became her lifelong friend and who figures prominently in many of our travels. Yvonne also traveled to Paris and to Rome in her youth. As described earlier, I traveled extensively while at the Naval Academy.

After we got married in 1963 our first big trip was a drive all the way across the USA from NYC to North Carolina to my Navy base in California along old highway US 66 with stops in St. Louis to see my grandparents and then a rodeo in Texas and a quick look at the Grand Canyon.

While working and raising Dean and Yvette our trips consisted mainly of weekend camping at Alexander Springs or Juniper Springs in the Ocala National Forest in Florida with yearly vacations in the Florida Keys. Then SCUBA diving took us all over the Bahamas, to Cozumel, Mexico and to Roatan, Honduras. Yvonne took both children to Sweden when they were very young. Of course we visited Disney World many times since it is close by.

It was after I retired in 1997 that we really began to travel both in the USA and abroad. This was made easy and affordable because our son, Dean, after his Navy career was a pilot for United Airlines and we could fly for free usually in First Class. Memorable domestic trips included:

The Grand Canyon--We started that adventure with a mule ride down (and up) the 5000 foot cliffs of the canyon.



Then we spent seven glorious days camping and riding a raft 270 miles through the canyon.



Another great trip out West was three weeks of camping in Utah at Arches National Park, Bryce Canyon and Zion. My highlight at Zion was climbing Angel's landing; not for the faint of heart.



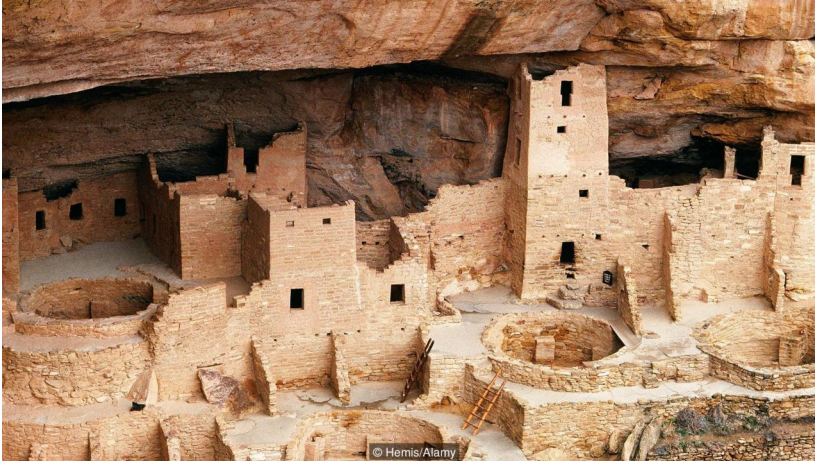
We have had so many other great adventures. We've driven the Pacific Coast Highway all the way from San Francisco to San Diego.



In the Northwest we visited Crater Lake and Mount Hood.



In the Southwest we went to the Four Corners and Mesa Verde.



We camped and whitewater rafted in the Smoky Mountains of North Carolina.



We've camped throughout Colorado visiting Colorado National Monument, Rocky Mountain National Park, Black Canyon of the Gunnison, Aspen and Steamboat Springs.



Twice we've visited Washington, DC and Gettysburg Battlefield. Once when our grandson was fifteen I had him drive me up there after he got his learner's permit. He loved the monuments and museums of DC and the battlefield at Gettysburg. He was impressed by the Naval Academy at Annapolis but after viewing their gun ho recruiting movie decided he didn't want to be a sailor.



Yvonne and I made two trips to Alaska, once on a cruise with my Naval Academy classmates and once RVing for three weeks. Fantastic scenery and wildlife. We flew a floatplane to the Misty

Fiords, a helicopter landed on a glacier and took wildlife cruises seeing humpback and killer whales, sea otters and grizzly bears.



Then off to Hawaii and a luxurious stay at the Maui Prince Hotel. We enjoyed SCUBA diving and riding bikes 10000 feet down Mount Haleakala starting in snowsuits and ending up in swimsuits. We drove the long Road to Hana.



We've visited South Dakota on the first anniversary of the 9-11 disaster and attended a memorial to the victims at Mount Rushmore. We also trekked in the Badlands and gawked at Devil's Tower.



After grandson Stephen's father was paralyzed in a motorcycle accident I regularly took him on lengthy camping trips. One good one was to Fort Pickens and the Naval Air Museum in Pensacola with a further trip to Birmingham, AL.



We've ridden to the top of the St. Louis Arch and Yvonne could feel it swaying.



We've camped or visited Yosemite, Kings Canyon, Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons.



On the spur of the moment we decided to fly up to Maine and had a wonderful camping adventure at Acadia National Park.



We've taken a pickup truck camper from Vancouver, BC to Victoria and across Canada to lake Louise and Banff and up the Icefields Parkway to Jasper.



We've been to San Antonio to see the Alamo and the Riverwalk.



We have been back to the Naval Academy in Annapolis for the 35th, 40th, 45th and 50th reunions of the Class of 1963 graduation.



Overseas we have, of course, been to Yvonne's home country of Sweden many times. We also toured Norway with Yvonne's friend Barbara soon after her husband had died.



I was asked to be the father-of-the-bride for Barbara's daughter Nicky so we flew to England for the beautiful wedding at Herstmonceux Castle in Sussex. Following the wedding Barbara and we went to Scotland where we visited Edinburgh, Spencer Castle and looked for the Lock Ness monster. For the speech I gave at her wedding see [Wedding](#).



Before Barbara's Peter died we along with our daughter Yvette visited them in London and the went to Paris with them and saw Versailles, the Louvre, and had dinner on the Bateau Mouche river boats. After

wards we took the TGV high speed train to Switzerland where we visited Yvonne's childhood friend, Carin. Then we took the train all the way up the Rhine river to Sweden and Yvonne's home.



Yvonne and I also took advantage of Peter and Barbara's hospitality by using their villa in Marbella, Spain after touring Lisbon, Portugal, the Algarve, Seville, Madrid, Segovia, Toledo and Avila Spain.



Barbara's second daughter, Lisa, was getting married in Austrailia so we used that as an excuse for three weeks visiting Sidney, the Blue

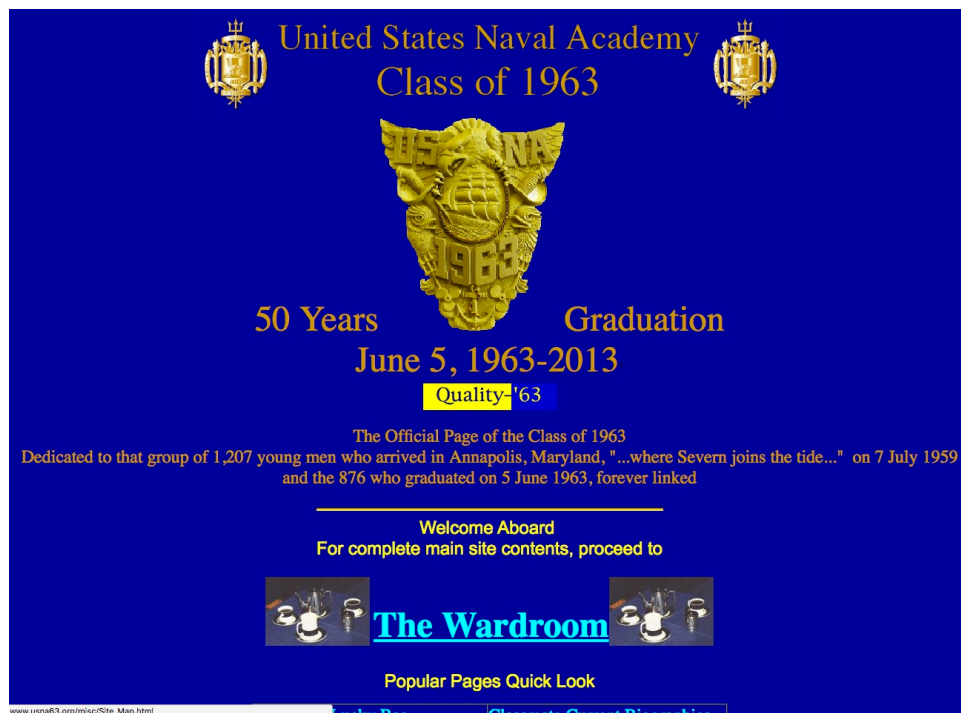
Mountains, Melbourne, the Grampians, Phillips Island and the Yarrow Valley. The wedding was fabulous held in a vineyard.



[Return to Beginning](#)

Naval Academy Website

Starting after my Naval Academy 35th Reunion in Annapolis in 1998 I joined Bill Kennedy, Mike Blackledge and Mike Shelley in creating a web page for the Class of 1963. Knowing nothing about coding HTML I had a long learning curve but after a few years became the webmaster of the site which consists of thousands of pages. While still active it can be viewed at <http://www.usna63.org/>. In years it hopefully will still be viewable at least in part at archive.org



Appendices

Appendix 1

Tales from the Natatorium



It seems like plebe year we spent an awful lot of time in the Natatorium. Early in plebe summer there was the sorting out of the swimmers versus the non-swimmers. I remember Coach Higgins teaching us the basic breaststroke. I also remember a big pot belly hanging over his Speedo but I just found out this info about him John Herbert Higgins (May 8, 1916 – August 1, 2004) was an American competition [swimmer](#) and swimming coach. He competed

during the transition time, when [breaststroke](#) swimmers were allowed to combine and swimming the [butterfly](#) arm stroke with the usual frog kick. Using this technique, he finished fourth at the [1936 Summer Olympics](#) in the 200 m, and set two world records in the 100 m breaststroke event in 1935 and 1936. During the Olympic trials, he set a national record in the 200 m breaststroke that was unbeaten until 1948. During his career, Higgins won 11 national titles and set 10 world records in breaststroke and medley events. In 1971, he was inducted to the [International Swimming Hall of Fame](#).

Also it seemed that our swimming days were always when the weather was frightful. Wearing our reef coats, carrying poncho and an armful of books we'd trudge to McDonough Hall and the Natatorium where it never felt much warmer than outside.

Remember floating in our khakies and trying to make floats out of the pants.

But the two things I really remember about the Natatorium are the tower jump and the forty minute swim. I had swum since I was a little tyke and was a lifeguard during high school so the water didn't phase me but I never cared much for heights. All through plebe summer I would stare up at that darn platform thirty feet up in the rafters and wonder if I would make the jump. Now consider classmates who feared both water and heights. It had to be a terrifying proposition. Well finally the day came for us to climb the rope ladder up to the tower and make the leap using approved abandon ship technique or else be assigned to the dreaded sub-squad with the promise of having to climb to the tower every day until finally able to jump. Our squad jumped into the pool and swam over to the rope ladder and one by one started climbing the swaying rope. I remember Cole Lindell reaching the top and doing a flip off the tower into the pool. I followed not even liking climbing the ladder until I reached the tower and cautiously toed my way to the edge. At this point for the first time in my life I discovered the power of peer pressure. There was no way I was going to let my fellow mids see how terrified I was and I stepped off the tower and one second later hit the water. Never again was I afraid of heights. It went that way for most, but a few just couldn't handle it and wouldn't jump. They had to climb back down the treacherous ladder and alas be put on the sub-squad. I really felt for them for it could have been me.

The other experience I remember was the forty minute swim where we had to swim some required number of laps around the pool and never touch the sides or else we were disqualified and, bingo-off to the sub-squad. I don't remember if we were in clothes or swimming suits. As I said I was a decent swimmer so I was charging around the pool intent on getting a 4.0. Suddenly I felt a firm hand on my head, which pushed me under the water. I thought; another bored swimmer who wanted to mess around. So I reached up and grabbed his leg and pulled him under. Oh no! The hand that submerged me belonged not to a strong swimmer but to one of those barely able to float who was floundering along trying to make at least the minimum number of laps. He choked and gasped and flailed over to the side of the pool where he was immediately disqualified. For fifty-five years I've felt terrible about that incident.

My final Natatorium memory is from I think first class year. If we could swim four hundred yards in some specified time we could validate the whole course of instruction. This should have been a piece of cake for me, but I had never swum for time. I started out like I was in a race and by about three hundred yards I had exhausted myself and sheepishly dropped out, meaning I had to go to every darn lesson. I counted that as a personal failure.

I'm sure others have memories from their time in the pool, but these are mine.

Steve C. '63

[Return to Main Text](#)

[Return to Beginning](#)

Appendix 2

Class of '63 - The Beginning- -From Steve Coester

Well, it's the Fortieth Anniversary of our entry to the World Famous USNA Class of 1963. We should all remember July 7, 1959 as being one of the most significant in our lives because it marked the start of our change from boys to men and gave us opportunities that have marked our lives forever. As I got to thinking about that day, I thought it would be fun to share what I remember of my feelings of that first day. And I'd love to hear your remembrances.

Forty years ago this week! I left my summer job as a lifeguard at Treecourt Pool. This was a milestone in my young life. I had worked for four years at the pool doing everything from basket boy, to short order cook, to grass cutter, and finally, the world's best job, lifeguard. That filled the period between childhood and young man. I had been notified only a month previously that I had been accepted at the Naval Academy under Public Law 186 for qualified alternates. I had given up on making it because I was only second alternate, behind **Ron Schowalter** and **Mike Bracy**, both of whom graduated in the Class of 63 with some measure of distinction. When I received that telegram from Western Union, it was definitely the most outstanding moment of my life to that time. I had planned my life since the sixth grade with the intention of attending USNA after reading an article about it in the World Book Encyclopedia and now I'd have my chance. I hadn't made any alternate plans for college, so who knows what would have happened to me if that telegram hadn't arrived.

On July 6, 1959, just one week before my eighteenth birthday, I kissed my mom goodby and solemnly shook my dad's hand and went to board the TWA Lockheed Constellation at St. Louis's Lambert Field. That three tailed, fish shaped

airplane in gleaming red and white seemed like the biggest grandest airplane that could ever be built. I had flown a lot in Piper Cubs and Cessnas because my dad worked at Lambert Field, but this was to be my very first flight in an airliner. I don't remember being nervous even though I had no idea when I'd ever see home again, and certainly had no idea what the next days, months and years had in store. I expected that every other new Mid would be six foot three, number one in his high school class, quarterback on the football team, and president of the student council. Here I was five foot eight, "only" a top ten percenter academically, and just third man on the school tennis team. I didn't think I would be a shining star at USNA but I was happy just to be going.

After landing at National Airport in D.C., things are kind of a blur. There I was with a heavy new leather suitcase, received a month earlier as a graduation present from Kirkwood High School. I lugged it around and must have stashed it somewhere for I decided to see a few sights. I climbed the steps five hundred feet up the Washington Monument just because I was seventeen and could. Then I went to the Smithsonian and looked at the Hope diamond. I gawked at the Mall and the White House. This was big stuff for a kid from the St. Louis suburbs who had seldom been out of Missouri.

I think I sacked out in the bus station overnight so I would be sure to get the first bus to Annapolis on July 7. I certainly wasn't going to be late in reporting. I doubt that I had ten dollars in my pocket. I remember getting off the bus at the Annapolis station expecting to see the buildings and monuments of the Academy. Instead I saw nothing to tell me where to go and no flag waving welcoming committee. After asking around, I got directions and lugged that darn suitcase the several blocks to the Academy gate. The irony was that the next day we were all told to pack up all of our civilian gear and ship it and the suitcase back home.

That first day was a blur of getting uniforms, haircuts, learning (unsuccessfully) how to stencil our names onto our blouses and trying to shape those silly sailor hats into something that looked a bit more swashbuckling. That first day

my roommate had his windup alarm clock stolen. I was shocked because I had studied up and knew about the Honor Concept. I guess some had to learn honor as they went along. We learned that we would receive the magnificent sum of five dollars a month in cash money. It never occurred to me to write home for more. The Plebe Detail, those Second Classmen, looked like young gods; so self assured, confident and omnipotent. How they managed to never break a sweat I still don't understand. It was impossible to realize they were only two years removed from us uncoordinated slobs. I was arbitrarily roomed with **Ron Machens** that Plebe Summer and was fortunate that we ended up in the same academic year company and roomed together for most of the next four years. Ron helped me immensely academically and psychologically to make it through the plebe and succeeding years. Despite my humble start and beyond my understanding I ended up wearing "stars", being on the Sup's List, and lettering in Tennis. I was a three striper until the infamous Christmas Leave Party, but that's another story that gets better every year. They even made me a Rhode's Scholarship candidate, but the Rhodes committee made up exclusively of left wing communist pinkos (of course), didn't choose any of Navy's candidates, not even our number one man, **Dan Hennessy**.

Plebe summer was **HOT!** By the time we put on our uniforms they were drenched. But we slowly learned our rates, and how to march and run and swim and shoot. We learned to spit shine our shoes and watched them crack at that first step. We brushed and brushed blue wool and still the lint glistened all over. We ate square meals, turned square corners, saluted and barked, "Yes Sir" thousands of times. And we did come arounds and braced up and sweated pennies to the wall until we were ready to drop. And, damned, if I didn't love every darn minute of it!

We watched new friends pack up and go home victims of psychological or physical stress or academic rigors for which they just weren't prepared. Those of us that remained became a part of something that transcended ourselves. We became

part of a tradition that started in 1845, members of the Brigade of Midshipmen, and brothers in the Class of 1963, incidentally the LAST class to have a REAL Plebe Year.

It remains an honor to be one of YOU.

- *Steve Coester*

[Return to main text](#)

[Return to Beginning](#)

Appendix 3

The 18th Company Pre Christmas Leave Party

A Sordid Tale of Misused Youth

So let's have a little party before going home on Christmas leave someone must have volunteered. No one seems to remember how it all started, but as things are wont to happen The Party seemed to



take on a life of its own. It was just before Christmas Leave of our First year. We had whipped Army for the fourth year in a row and things were looking pretty good in Mother B. The 18th Company had a reputation for being one of the best damn companies in the Brigade, the Class of 1963 was held in high esteem, and we were just about finished with our last really tough academic semester. We deserved to kick loose and have a fling.

The details are fuzzy, but somehow it was mutually decided that the festivities should be held in the room of Ron Machens, Tak Takabayashi, and Steve Coester. Theirs was the big room at the end of the corridor that spanned two normal rooms plus the width of the passageway. Made sense to the occupants. That settled, it was determined that if there was going to be a party there had to be some booze. Somehow the fact that getting caught would be a Class A

offense didn't make much of an impression. Also at that time it was against Maryland state law to sell alcohol to midshipmen so this called for ingenuity. It didn't prove too difficult to find a wino who would make the necessary purchases. One of the main shoppers eventually rose to Flag rank and another became Company Commander after he escaped the eventual consequences. Now with contraband in hand where could it be stored until party day? In the confidential lockers of course, in there with all those papers with the pretty little red security stamps all over them. I suppose that violated a regulation or two also.█

Finally the evening before Christmas Leave 1962 arrived and it was party time! Almost every firsty in the 18th crowded into the room with their individual bottles of forbidden liquor. The stereo was turned up full blast and the party began and the bottles started to drain. Even though it was December, the room started getting pretty warm so the windows were flung open. This went on long after taps and everyone who still had any rational thoughts was feeling pretty smug about how we had put a big one over on all the petty regs.█

Suddenly the door was flung open and it wasn't Santa and his reindeer. Standing there was the OOD (a jar head) and his mate. Apparently he had heard the festivities all the way down on the road between Dalhgren Hall and Bancroft and decided to see what was up. Time stood still for a microscopic eternity. Then the OOD's face crumbled like why the hell did he have to find this, what had he done to deserve this situation. Someone croaked, "Attention on deck!". The music continued to blare and the room exploded. Some snapped to as rigid a version of braced up as they could manage in their advanced state of pre holiday cheer. Several dove out of the open windows. Seeing that we were on the sixth deck this seemed pretty hazardous and absolutely humorous at the same time. Remember the three foot wide stone and copper gutters that ran around the top of Bancroft Hall ? They were just below the window level and offered a quick, if perilous, route between rooms. Seeing several friends appearing to fly out of the window had a nervous effect on Steve who began to giggle which caused several other miscreants to also start to laugh while trying to hold a brace. Captain Whoever failed to see the humor at all.█

Ollie Donelon had stepped out for ice . He rounded the corner to

come back to the room and all he saw was the back of the OOD! He never got caught. I guess good things sometimes happen to really rotten people. Needless to say he did not volunteer to join the club!

Tom Reemelin remembers that his intentions were to not imbibe because of prior indiscretions, but the spirit of the season and the terrific sing-along caught him up in the festivities!. Tom was one of the flyers but as he tried to climb out of the window to hide on the ledge outside (6 stories up!) he couldn't quite get his slightly inebriated butt out the window in time and was ordered to rejoin the party.

Chooch Machens hid in a closet and you should have seen the grin on his face when the mate (or OOD) opened it up and invited him to step back into the room.

Tak dove behind a bunk but was observed and ordered back where he could be seen. Tak, Tom, and Steve apparently looked a little worse for wear , and Tom had his usual rosy cheeked complexion so they were escorted to sick bay apparently for sobriety checks. Many push ups were done trying to get rid of any traces of alcohol, however nothing happened there and eventually they were sent back topside.

As remembered there were several who escaped, but thirteen were suddenly in BIG TROUBLE. We were herded (marched would be an insult to military discipline) down to the Rotunda and OOD's office where Form 2's were diligently prepared charging everyone with all sorts of unofficer like conduct. We were finally dismissed early the next morning with the advice to call Mommy and Daddy and let them know we wouldn't be coming home for Christmas.

Check this out to see how Dave Durfee and Art Clark missed the festivities and became Company Strippers.

Mike Cronin sent in the straight poop on how he became the 18th Company Commander. ([Click here](#)), Mike Cronin was actually studying, possibly for the first time ever, and was late for the Party.

Christmas Leave morning all those charged were sitting around in their skivvies watching everyone else, even the plebes, packing their B-4 bags and cheerfully getting ready to head out. It was starting to sink in that this lark could actually result in dismissal! After start of leave was announced, another PA announcement said very somberly, "All midshipmen on Class A pending may go on Christmas

Leave. Report to the OOD's office upon return." Obviously someone finally figured out that the whole infrastructure would have to be maintained if they kept us around.█

After leave those caught at the party were judged guilty and awarded ninety demerits and three months of restriction. Also everyone was interviewed by the Commandant and a letter of reprimand placed in their midshipman file. I think all the restrictees were thankful for the leniency. I remember that some of those on restriction later climbed out the windows of the unfinished 8th Wing and took "liberty" in D.C. anyway. But that's another story.█

There were a lot of stripes lost that night, including two three strippers, and many found out that their Class standing dropped several points based on "aptitude for Naval service". On the positive side, those who either didn't attend the party or who escaped had their standings improved and got those vacated stripes. Restriction probably improved some grades on the first semester finals and a few learned a lesson or two.

Compiled by Steve Coester with help from Pete Quinton, Dave Durfee, Tom Reemelin, Mike Cronin and Ollie Donelan

[Return to main text](#)

[Return to Beginning](#)

Appendix 4

Launching Apollo 11 to the Moon



In 1969 I was a 28 year old engineer, one of several responsible for fueling the giant Saturn V rocket with Liquid Hydrogen. My favorite Apollo memory was performing my final walkdown of the LUT just before launching Apollo 11. We were so aware of the

enormity of what we were about to do. The MSS (mobile service structure) had been rolled back revealing the enormous Saturn V to full view. It was after dark and the spotlights were casting their cones of illumination on the stack. I was virtually alone on the tower as I examined every component of the LH2 system to be as sure as I could that "my" system would do its job. It was just me and the Saturn V with a bright moon overhead. I would look at the moon , then at the rocket and think, " I don't want to be anywhere but right where I am right now"

Long forgotten is the fact that the Apollo 11 launch was almost scrubbed on July 16. I was assigned to the launch console (C4HU) that maintained 100% liquid hydrogen level in the Saturn third stage which was used to propel the astronauts from earth orbit to the moon. Late in the propellant loading as we were beginning the S-IVB replenish operation, a large liquid hydrogen leak at -423 degrees occurred on the third stage replenish valve on the 200 foot level of the launch umbilical tower. Loading was terminated and the lines drained to prevent a fire or explosion and a Red Crew went to the Pad to fix the problem.

Using troubleshooting that I developed the Red Crew torqued packing and flange bolts and cycled the valve. then we resumed liquid hydrogen flow, but were unsuccessful in stopping the leak which prevented maintaining the 100% fuel level in the Saturn third stage. Without a full tank of liquid hydrogen there would be no launch. Finally the leak was isolated by freezing the valve by pouring water over it, but that made the critical valve inoperable. We then developed a way to use the large main fill valve which was not intended for that purpose to maintain the level and the launch countdown could finally continue. For several hours another engineer (CPH1) manually cycled the valve from his console as I reported the tank level as it fell below or exceeded 100%. See the PCR (procedure change request) that I wrote.

For the actual voice transcripts by Public Affairs during this problem see <http://history.nasa.gov/ap11fj/01launch.htm>.

If we hadn't controlled the leak and maintained proper LH2 level the moon launch would have been scrubbed for at least July 16 and probably for several days.

I was twenty-eight years old when we landed on the moon,

responsible for loading 600000 gallons of LH2 on the "moon rocket".
The managers were in their early thirties and someone over forty
was "the old man". Exciting times!

[Return to main text](#)

[Return to Beginning](#)

Appendix 5

Space Shuttle Challenger Disaster

A Personal Perspective

Stephen Coester



Some events are indelibly inscribed in our consciousness such as

Pearl Harbor, 9-11-2001 and the Challenger Disaster on January 28, 1986. Here is my personal recollection of Challenger.

By the time we were ready to launch our second Space Shuttle Oribiter, Challenger on its tenth mission the Kennedy Space Center launch team has successfully launched twenty-four Space Shuttles including a Columbia mission just two weeks earlier carrying U.S. Representative Bill Nelson from our home district. The only major flaw in any of those missions had been July 29, 1985 occurring on Challenger when a faulty sensor caused a main engine (SSME) early shutdown and a abort to orbit on two engines, but all mission objectives were achieved.

The launch team and all of NASA were confident and launching had become fairly routine. I had participated in all the pre-launch processing and the Challenger was ready for flight. For the first several Space Shuttle flights I had been the Supervisor of Main Propulsion Engineering (MPS), but after a contract change I was now a MPS System Specialist, an advisor to the new prime contractor. Up to this time I had supported every mission for twenty-one years in the blockhouse or firing room and eventually supported one hundred and fifteen launches including Apollo, Atlas-Centaur and Space Shuttle. But on this particular Challenger mission another System Specialist and I agreed that only one of us needed to support the launch and we would alternate missions. He drew Challenger. So for every launch over thirty-three years that I was involved in this was the only one I didn't directly support on a launch console.

As the countdown progressed I was instead standing out in the Launch Control Center parking lot with all the other employees looking forward to actually seeing a launch in person and not on a small black and white TV screen at my console.

I was very nervous because the outside temperature was below freezing. I had earlier experience with equipment problems in cold weather back in the Apollo days which caused line ruptures and a pressure related explosion in my GSE which caused some damage on the ground. The previous night's low temperature was an unheard of eighteen degrees and icicles were hanging from the launch tower. I kept trying to come up with a good reason to approach management but analyzing the MPS and engine systems couldn't come up with a cold related problem. After all, these systems operated in a range

from -423 degrees to 3000 degrees so a little cold shouldn't affect them. I presumed all the other systems and contractors were doing the same thing.

The launch occurred without incident and at T+73 seconds right at the "Go for Power Up" call the explosion occurred. I saw the big cloud and solid rockets fly off wildly and immediately knew something had gone terribly wrong. I raced the few yards into the control room and asked my vice president what I should do. He told me to go home, come in early the next day because we'd have lots of work to do. The firing room was locked down and everything was sealed. For several weeks I poured over all of the thousands of pieces of flight data from the MPS system. Every instrument was totally normal until suddenly data just stopped at T+73 seconds like it had been cut by a knife. So a review of MPS and SSME data didn't provide any answers. Considering all of the onboard systems, the MPS and SSMEs had to be a prime suspect for any explosion like this. Barges, submarines and surface ships combed the seabed and recovered most of the Challenger pieces. These were laid out in a big tent. I had to walk through all this wreckage and examine each broken piece of my system to try to find a cause of the explosion. It was very emotional. The SSME power heads looked fine although everything was bent up. No obvious culprits were found in my systems.

I considered the most likely part of the MPS system that would cause an accident of this kind were the two seventeen inch disconnects between the external tank and the orbiter. Inadvertent closure of either valve in a 17-inch disconnect during space shuttle main engine thrusting would stop propellant flow from the external tank to all three main engines. Catastrophic failure of the main engines and external tank feed lines would result.

There had been test failures and we had performed modifications on the valves to prevent them from slamming closed during 25000 gpm flow of LH2 and LO2 to the engines. Finally both disconnect plates were retrieved from the ocean and thankfully for me both were still locked in their open position. This eliminated them as a cause of the disaster.

Finally a sharp eyed engineer who was reviewing the launch camera films discovered a puff of smoke from one of the solid rocket

segments and then flame from that joint. The cause had been found. The SRB leak occurred in exactly the wrong place impinging on the strut that held the external tank to the solid rocket and cutting through it. This caused the SRB to swing away from the external tank at the bottom and crush it at the top causing the explosion.

Finally the cause had been found and in my sorrow I could at least be thankful it wasn't my system that had caused the accident. Quickly it was determined that the cold weather had hardened an o-ring in one of the solid rocket joints. It didn't seal and the leak occurred.

I stayed in my position as MPS system Specialist for another eleven years and the day to day test and operations work was fine, but the last few minutes before launch was misery for me and I was extremely nervous at liftoff. Never after the Challenger disaster did I enjoy those last few minutes leading to lift off. It wasn't until years later that I understood how profoundly the Challenger accident had affected my psyche.

I've recently visited the KSC Visitor Center and each time I gazed at the SRB my first thoughts are about the accident. I would bet that virtually every other KSC employee has the same feeling.

[Return to main text](#)

[Return to Beginning](#)

Appendix 6

Memories of Space Stephen H. Coester

In 1964, I was medically separated from the Navy in California at age 23 with a wife and a newborn child. My parents were then living in Hollywood, FL so we headed East to see them and figure out what a Naval Academy grad was going to do with the rest of his life. After searching the Miami want ads I chanced upon an ad from Boeing looking for engineers on the Apollo program at KSC. I interviewed and was hired by Boeing by John Redmond into the Systems Engineering department in November of 1964. I was about the four hundredth person hired by Boeing (led by Wendall Clark) which would eventually grow to several thousand.

1964-1973

Shortly after hiring in I was assigned to the team preparing Boeing's response to the Apollo/Saturn RFP and acted as coordinator along with Charlie Friend to compile the inputs of all of the many engineering disciplines into a proposal. Based on my performance in that task, Mitch Hart requested me to be his Administrative Assistant while setting up and hiring personnel for the Procedures and Specifications and Requirements group. During the buildup this was exciting but I became bored and wanted to become part of the hands on Launch Team. I requested a transfer to the Test Engineering group under Howard (Hardy Hardcastle) and reported to the Liquid Hydrogen group on Pad 39A under Rocky Calvetto. The Lead engineers were Stu Woodward and Wes Westmoreland. Gail Griebel patiently taught me the ins and outs of the LH2 System. Jack Kramer was my co-hart in getting every job done right. About that time they were conducting cold flow tests to validate the LH2 transfer system and preparing for the first Tanking test of the non flight Facilities

Integration Vehicle, SA-500F. I was assigned to monitor the S-IVB tanking as C4HU in Firing Room One and supported the rest of The Saturn V launches from one console or another. On SA-508 I controlled the LH2 tanking as CCLH. Incidentally this was Apollo 13.



We often referred to the Liquid Hydrogen system as a big vacuum system that also transferred hydrogen. I became expert in operating vacuum pumps and performing mass spectrometer leak checks of the vacuum jacketed piping. There were about forty vacuum sections each on LC39 A & B; and over twenty on each of the three LUTS (Umbilical Towers). Of course we also had to offload countless trailers of LH2 into the 800000 gallon storage dewar, perform component, subsystem and system level tests. The burn pond where vented hydrogen gas was disposed of was a continuous challenge with approximately 1500 individually adjusted bubble caps to maintain the proper vent pressures. We also prepared all of the system level

test procedures and worked with the Test Conductors on the Launch Countdown and Tanking procedures. Also there were endless modifications and problems to resolve.

My favorite Apollo memory was performing my final walkdown of the LUT just before launching Apollo 11. We were so aware of the enormity of what we were about to do. The MSS had been rolled back revealing the enormous Saturn V to full view. It was after dark and the spotlights were casting their cones of illumination on the stack. I was virtually alone on the tower as I examined every component of the LH2 system to be as sure as I could that "my" system would do its job. It was just me and the Saturn V with a bright moon overhead. I would look at the moon , then at the rocket and think, " I don't want to be anywhere but right where I am right now"

On the eve of the fortieth anniversary of Apollo 11 I was confused because of the above story as to whether I was on the prime Firing Room crew or was on the back up team for that historic launch. I wrote my fellow systems engineer Jack Kramer who wrote the following:

"You were C4HU for Apollo 11. I was CPH1. You were in charge of the SIVB level while we bypassed the replenish valve because of the leaking valve. I have (at home) the Procedure change you wrote so

we could do it.

PROCEDURE CHANGE REQUEST				1. TCP TITLE	2. DATE	3. CONTRACTOR
				2V Auto/17m	7/16/01	BOEING
4. PCR NUMBER				5. TCP NUMBER	6. REV	7. VEHICLE
B-37-JIL				V-35014	004	504ESV3
				8. SHEET		9. OF
				1 OF		2
10. PAGE	11. TIME	12. SEQ.	13. CHANGE	14. REASON		
			REAL TIME - ONE TIME ONLY			
73		AFTER 1-1	ADD (A) PLACE S-IVB REPLENISH VALVE MAN/AUTO SWITCH TO MINIMIZE TO MANUAL EXPOSURE OF A3311 (B) VERIFY THUMBWHEELS TO CRYOGENIC TEMPERATURES DURING SET TO "00" RE-LOADING			
74		SECT 22	DELETE SEQUENCES 1, 3			
74		SECT 22	ADD NEW STEP AFTER STEP 2 2-1 143 CCH CPH1 MAINTAIN S-IVB LH2 AT FLIGHT MASS BY CYCLING S-IVB FILL VALVE A3321 TO REDUCED, THEN CLOSED WHEN FLIGHT MASS IS 100%. REPEAT AS REQUIRED			
75		NEW 9	AT T-10 MINUTES CPH1 VERIFY A3321 CLOSED CCHU PLACE REPLENISH VALVE AUTO/MAN SWITCH TO AUTO			
52						
14. CONTRACTOR APPROVAL		DATE	15. KSC ENGINEERING	DATE	16. KSC TEST COND.	DATE
[Signature]		1.1.1	[Signature]	1.1.1	1.1.1	2/1/11

[illegible]

Those were long days. You probably did the walkdown of the system then came to the firing room. It was always the best on night shift looking at that monster in the floodlights.

Wayne Gray and Red Davis, a safety guy and I were on the launcher while you detailed the plans for torquing the valve bolts and leak checking the valve. When we warmed up the valve with the hard hat bucket brigade I came back to the firing room and you and I controlled the level by cycling the main fill valve using the slow fill mode. If we hadn't controlled the leak and maintained proper LH2 level the launch would have been scrubbed for the day."

I was twenty-eight years old when we landed on the moon, responsible for loading 600000 gallons of LH2 on the "moon rocket". The managers were in their early thirties and someone over forty was "the old man". Exciting times!

Things were way different back then safety wise. Often I would climb outside of the handrails on the 240 foot level of the tower and shinny out on the vent line to inspect a pipe or expansion joint. Never gave a thought to a safety belt! During one cold flow test I got permission to stand out at the burn pond to monitor the flame patterns during venting which caused a hundred foot square by hundred foot high conflagration. And once we had a leak on the twelve inch vent valve from the storage tank. At that time helium for inerting was a rare and expensive commodity and it was going to take months for the tank to warm up enough to inert it with nitrogen so we decided to remove the vent valve with a partially full tank. We all had on anti static clothes and leg stats and fans to blow the hydrogen away, but as soon as the flange was loosened we were enveloped in a cloud of hydrogen vapor. I was sure an explosion would ensue, but we had little choice but to complete the job. Somehow we survived.

After the Apollo program was prematurely canceled, I was assigned to modify Pad 39B to support the launch of the Saturn-IB from the milkstool for the Skylab program. What a clever idea that was! During that period I received my MBA from FSU. After supporting all of the S-IB launches to Skylab, as the workforce was being decimated, I volunteered for layoff when a job launching Atlas-Centaur became available at LC36.



Skylab 2 on the Milkstool

[Return to Space Shuttle text](#)

Burning up Security Vehicles

While I'm in a story telling mood here's another Tale from the Rocket Wars. Apologies to Stew Woodward, my old lead engineer whose account I've freely taken. For this story I was just an observer from my liquid hydrogen post in the Firing Room, but it's a good one. By the way Apollo 13 was lifted on Saturn 508 and for this flight I had been honored to operate the main LH2 loading console directing the loading operation. Liquid oxygen which combined with either RP-1 (kerosene) or liquid hydrogen powers the Saturn V rocket was stored on the perimeter of the launch complex in a large 800,000 gallon insulated tank (as was liquid hydrogen on the other side of the Pad). It was transferred across the field and up the Umbilical Tower using huge centrifugal pumps. Because the main transfer line was uninsulated a long chill down operation had to be performed to cool the line and provide high quality LO2 to the rocket. So hours before

the loading of the Saturn V started, a small amount of LO₂ (about 25000 gallons!) was allowed to flow through the pumps, lines, and launch vehicle and out a drain into a ditch in the adjacent swamp. This was normally not a problem. The LO₂ vaporized and the wind blew it away. It quickly mixed in with O₂ already in the air. Apollo 13 was different. and we all know what happened later on its way to the moon. But this tale has nothing to do with that disaster.

We were doing a CDDT, Countdown Demonstration Test, a simulated countdown including fueling the rocket to show we could do it right on the Apollo 13 launch day. The day was overcast, not a breath of wind and the humidity and temperature were just right. On that day the pure oxygen draining into the ditch next to the road did not dissipate. It just sat in the ditch. You have all heard the stories of what happens in a hospital oxygen tent if you light a cigarette. In a 100% oxygen atmosphere it almost explodes it burns so fast.

The Security Police manned the guardhouse at the entrance to the launch pad. Just before we started loading the launch vehicle with fuel and oxidizer the pad was officially cleared, except for the police who did a final sweep of the Pad. They would get in their patrol cars and drive around the pad perimeter road with red lights flashing and loud speakers blaring, "Clear the Pad." They would then report to the test conductor that the pad was officially clear for propellant loading and launch and exit the Pad through a gate near the LO₂ facility. That day as we followed the patrol cars around the pad and out the gate on our console television monitors, they entered a fog bank where the dirt road was near the ditch. Normally this would have been condensed moisture from the humid air caused by the cold oxygen gas, but for Apollo 13 it evidently was pure oxygen. As the patrol cars drove through the cloud the hot grease on the engines caught fire. We saw the Security Police jump out and run to safety. A second car and then third followed and exploded in flame. No one knew what the heck was happening. We watched as the patrol cars burned with the oil, grease and gasoline acting as the fuel and the pure oxygen. The vehicles melted down to the engine blocks. Fortunately all of the patrolmen escaped. Once the excitement died down we resumed the

simulated countdown. Never again did the police use that Pad exit!



[Return to Space Shuttle text](#)

Burned in fire Training

All of us who worked on the Launch Pad during Apollo took continuous safety courses in things like safety showers/eye washes, Scott Airpack breathing, safety harnesses, hazardous gases, pad egress, etc.

My favorite was always fire training. We would learn to use fire extinguishers on small fires and hoses on actual large oil fires.

I had done this course every year and while exciting was relatively safe. Well one year we were fighting fires and the day was extremely

windy with about a 30 mph north wind. One drill was for five guys to follow a trail which had several small fires. The first and last had extinguishers and the center three were just along for the ride. Well, on this day the wind had whipped the flames to 20 feet high and I questioned the professionals whether it was safe. They said to quit being a chicken and go for it.

We entered the trail with me being the last guy all of us in coveralls, gloves, and breathing apparatus. The first guy attempted to knock down the first raging fire, but it flared right up. I hit it with my extinguisher to no effect. Suddenly we were surrounded by a wall of flame and all discipline was lost. We all bailed out through the wall of fire.

The fire fighters called us together to chew us out for our failure, but by this time I realized that all my exposed skin was feeling hot. I told them I needed to go to Medical and they said nonsense. I insisted and another engineer said he was also burned. At Medical they took it seriously and quickly applied ice water pads to our burns.

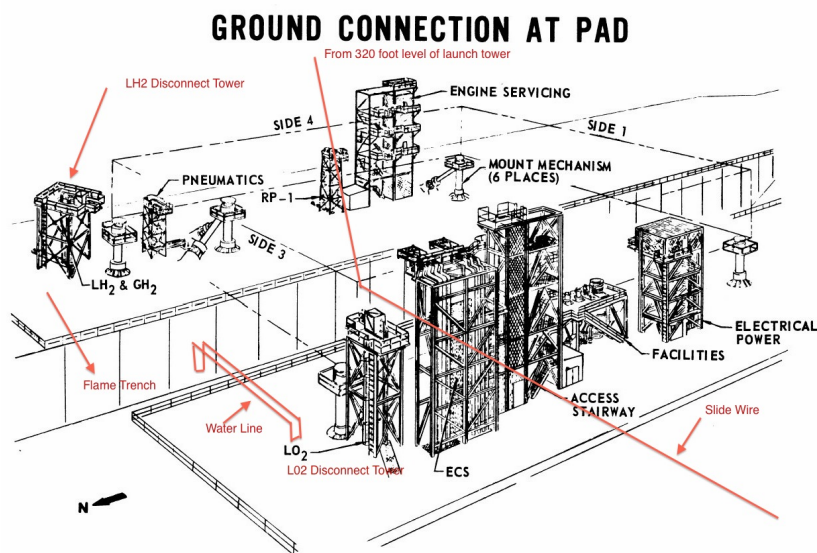
The other engineer was burned worse than me, but both of us lost all the skin on our necks, ears, wrists and anywhere not covered. The medical personnel said we were within seconds of being burned to death.

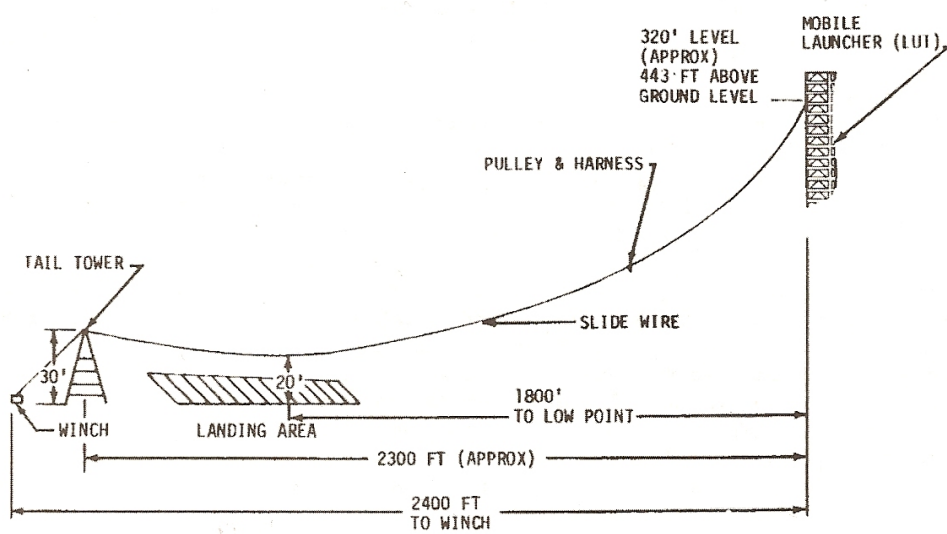
After the "smoke" cleared the Fire Chief in charge was fired and they toned down this safety course.

Life was sure exciting back then.

[Return to Space Shuttle text](#)

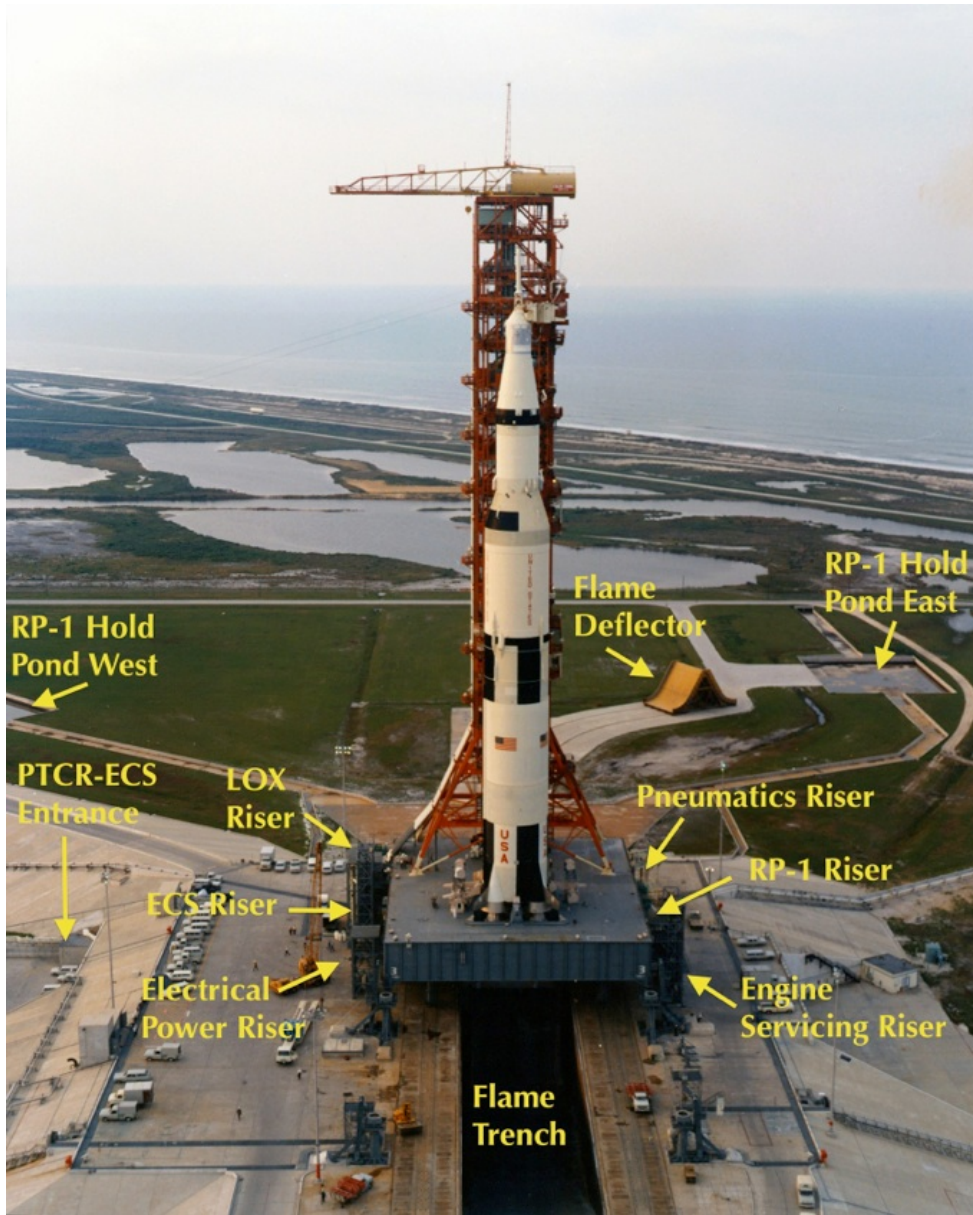
Tales from the Rocket Wars Sometimes I feel we should have received "Darwin Awards" instead of Performance Awards.





EGRESS SYSTEM





The first I'll call Slidewire for Dummies.

During planning for Apollo astronaut safety a big rubber room was constructed under the pad. The idea was that in case of a fire or other emergency the astronauts would exit the capsule, ride the elevator down to inside the launch platform, slide down a teflon chute into the safe room and ride out whatever was happening above.

Soon they figured out that if the disaster was below them they probably would never make it to the room so they started designing a

slide wire which would take them from the 320 foot level of the tower, just outside the capsule to 2300 feet away from the pad. Eventually they decided on a basket system where the astronauts would climb into the basket, hit a release and zoom down the wire. The same system was used for Space Shuttle but fortunately it never had to be used on either program.

One of the early designs was to have the astronauts wear a harness that would clip onto the wire. One day I was walking in the pad surface near the L02 Disconnect Tower (see sketch) and I heard a scream to take cover. They were testing the harness system with a life-sized dummy and it fell off the wire at 320 feet above the pad surface smashed into the L02 Disconnect tower, bounced off and landed pretty near me. so much for that idea.

[Return to Space Shuttle text](#)

The second Tale is about a water test on the launch pad.

Water for fire suppression and exhaust cooling was supplied to the pad through giant 36 inch pipes and at high pressure to reach all the way to the top of the Saturn rocket. One day I was performing some test on the LH2 Disconnect Tower and noticed tech configuring the water system. They connected a reducer to the 36 inch flange bringing it down to 12 inches. Then ran a pipe about forty feet from there over to the flame trench with an elbow pointing down into the trench (see sketch). Obviously they were going to do some kind of flow test of the water system.

They cleared the immediate area and hit the button to start flow. The tremendous pressure hit that 12 inch pipe like a rocket engine and ripped the whole forty feet of big pipe off of the 36 inch flange. Two things happen at once. First we now had a 36 inch column of water shooting hundreds of feet straight up. Secondly and more important to me standing just across the flame trench was that forty feet of pipe launching up a couple of hundred feet and slowly tumbling as it decided where to land. We had nowhere to go since we were 30 feet

up on our little tower so we just watched. Thankfully the pipe fell into the flame trench missing us and our tower.

During the apollo program a tech unbolted a 12 inch flange from the water system not knowing the system was pressurized. The flange broke the last few bolts, hit the man in the chest, killing him instantly. Everything was dangerous on the launch pad.

[Return to Space Shuttle text](#)

Another strange story from Tales of the Space Wars





When Launch Complex 39 was built the liquid hydrogen tank (See first photo) was painted per some federal spec with white on top and tan on the bottom and with simply "Liquid Hydrogen, No Smoking".

That worked just fine until OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) was created in 1970. One day we received a directive that our one of a kind hydrogen tank was not in compliance with OSHA regulations. The proper color was all white and the terminology had to be "Liquified Hydrogen, Flammable Gas" (second photo).

We thought this was pretty ridiculous as the tank is eighty feet in diameter and you can imagine how much paint that is and we kind of like the way it looked and the simplicity of the words. We hemmed and hawed and delayed but were finally threatened with fines (your money, not ours). I put in a work order to have the tank painted per the new design. Obviously this was a massive job with painters in protective berating gear and big spray guns and it took several weeks.

Finally the tank was all white and they started painting the three foot tall lettering. first I questioned the spelling of "Liquified" since the preferred spelling is "Liquefied" but OSHA ruled.

Then one day I went out to see how it was coming along and there's this painter high on his scaffold merrily painting. He had completed "Liquified" and I notice the first three letters of the second word were "NIT", not "HYD". I yelled up to him to stop immediately and that his was a hydrogen tank, not a nitrogen tank. He reached into his coveralls and produced a piece of paper and said, "I paint what's on my work order", and continued painting.

I was tempted to let him compile the whole word, "NITROGEN", but didn't and made a few phone calls. Eventually they got it right.

Bet you never heard that one!

[Return to Space Shuttle text](#)

Another tale from the Rocket Ranch.

As shown in the photo above the 850000 gallon liquid hydrogen tank has a big pipe sticking out the top of it. LH2 is liquid at -423 degrees and it continuously trying to turn to gas. That pipe is the vent to safely disburse the "boiloff". Hydrogen gas is extremely flammable and lightning or even static will ignite that venting gas making it look like a giant blowtorch. Early in the Apollo program we would get almost nightly calls from the test conductor saying our tank was on fire. We would call in a crew to come in and close the 12" vent valve and purge the pipe with gaseous nitrogen (GN2) until the fire was extinguished. After a year or two we figured the darn thing could safely burn until first shift came in to put it out. That leads into another tale. The last thing that the LH2 team had to do before clearing the pad for launch was to open the big manual valve at the bottom of the tank that allowed flow up to the Saturn V, and to switch the venting gas from that top pipe to the closed A3306 valve that let us pressurize the tank to 60 psi and pushed the LH2 up the tower and

into the rocket. When A3306 was opened to vent the tank it created. 10000 square foot conflagration in the hydrogen burn pond for Apollo or burn stack for Shuttle. Very impressive to see. Anyway one night I was on that final preps crew and was waiting in our office trailer for the call to switch the valves. Early in the Apollo program they would tow all the trailers from the pad to prevent blast damage. Finally they determined more damage was being done removing them than letting them get blasted. Unknown to me the move crew had come in and moved the steps for the trailer about two feet out in preparation for the move. I got the call from the test conductor to perform our final preps and like I had done a thousand times opened the door and stepped out ...into nothing. As I fell the three feet to the ground my shins scrapped along the back of the steps ripping them to shreds. Then my elbows slammed into the top step. I was really in pain and bleeding from my legs, but I struggled up , rounded up my technicians and went out to finish our launch preparations. Then I cleaned myself up, cleared the launch pad and headed to the Firing Room to support the Saturn V launch on one of the hydrogen consoles.

[Return to Space Shuttle text](#)

Incorrect Bellows on the Fill Line

The only moon launch from LC-39B: Cernan's Apollo 10 mission was launched on AS505 from LC-39B, the only mission to the moon launched from that pad. All others were from LC39A. Pad B was advertised as being identical to LC39A but during activation we found some significant differences. I was performing the initial fill of 850,000 gallons of super cold (-423 degrees F) highly flammable liquid hydrogen into the storage tank. This was done from numerous LH2 tanker trucks that held either 5000 gallons or 11,000 gallons. In the photo the fill manifold is shown in the foreground and we could offload five tankers at a time. We hooked up the five tankers, opened the valves, pressurized the tankers and started pushing liquid hydrogen into the giant storage tank. We had done this hundreds of times on Pad A so it was a hazardous but pretty routine operation. I was leaning against the fill manifold controlling the operation when

suddenly I heard a bang and saw the four inch diameter fill line bowing up out of its restraints like a writing snake. I immediately terminated fill and vented the tankers and watched as all the expansion bellow started cracking spewing clouds of vapor into the air. Everything looked identical to the same configuration we had used so long at the other pad so what had gone wrong. After safing the system I headed for the installation drawings. What I discovered was that unlike Pad A which used Inconel as the metal for the pressure carrier, the designers has switched to 316 stainless steel on pad B. But on both pads had used exactly the same expansion bellows. Inconel has extremely low contraction under cryogenic temperatures while stainless steel can shrink quite a lot. When the super cold hydrogen hit the stainless steel lines, the line contracted causing it to bend within its restraining supports and over stressing the bellows to the point the cracked and split. Quick reaction prevented a break of the pressure carrier line so no hydrogen was released. The system was down for several weeks while the bellows were replaced with much larger ones. After redesign and repair the tank was finally filled and thereafter successfully supported Apollo10/AS505, Skylab and Apollo- Souez and the Space Shuttle program.

[Return to Space Shuttle text](#)

1973-1978 General Dynamics/Convair

I spent five wonderful years launching like the early space pioneers. General Dynamics had only about three hundred people on the whole program at CCAFS versus the tens of thousands on Apollo at KSC. There was no doubt who was responsible when something good or bad occurred on your system on Atlas-Centaur. I worked for Silas Baker and Clay Dennis with Dave Rogers as Lead Engineer. Hank Eskinsen was my mentor while learning the Centaur systems. I was the Centaur Pneumatics engineer and brought some valuable vacuum knowledge to the Centaur program. One of the prime purposes of performing a tanking test was to verify the integrity of the Centaur intermediate bulkhead which separated the oxygen and

hydrogen tanks. Almost inevitably the bulkhead would fail its vacuum check under the cryo condition resulting in a myriad of leak checks and another expensive tanking test. I suggested many changes to the Centaur bulkhead hardware and the ground vacuum monitoring equipment which after implementation resulted in never again failing the test. I participated in about thirty Atlas-Centaur launches. With the advent of the Space Shuttle it was announced that all unmanned launch vehicles would be discontinued so I went to KSC in search of some job security. As we know now some 23 years later they are still launching Atlas-Centaurs as a result of the Challenger disaster.

I tell a lot of stories and naturally, I suppose, I relate those that put me in a good light. Well the last one about how I fixed the Centaur vacuum system reminded me of this one that didn't turn out so well. We worked a modification to install three state of the art pressure sensors on the Centaur upper stage. They were extremely accurate and sensitive and while I forget their exact function had something to do with controlling the RL-10 engines. I'll bet Gary Reichley remembers. After installation it was on me and my two experienced and fun technicians, Jimmy Jones, a Pearl Harbor survivor as a young sailor in 1941, and Tex Arnold a sharp mechanic who liked to play the part of a Florida redneck to check out and calibrate the newly installed transducers. Armed with flex hoses, pressure panel and extremely accurate Heise gage Jimmy and Tex performed my test procedure to verify that the transducers met their specifications and would use two out of three voting logic to control the engines. Everything was going great when it became time for lunch break. The techs closed the valves on the test panel and we left the launch tower to get a bite. When we returned thirty minutes later I glanced at the Heise gage and it was spiked out high way over the rated pressure of the new transducers. The inlet valve of the test panel had leaked and in retrospect we should have taken more steps to cut off the pressure. We had just over pressurized the three brand new instruments destroying them. Each cost \$10000 in 1975 dollars when similar but less accurate ones cost a couple of hundred dollars. Fortunately there were three spares and we repeated the installation which involved de-brazing the ruined ones and brazing in the new and completed the testing without impacting the launch. I don't even

remember getting yelled at and certainly didn't get fired but remember that booboo to this day.

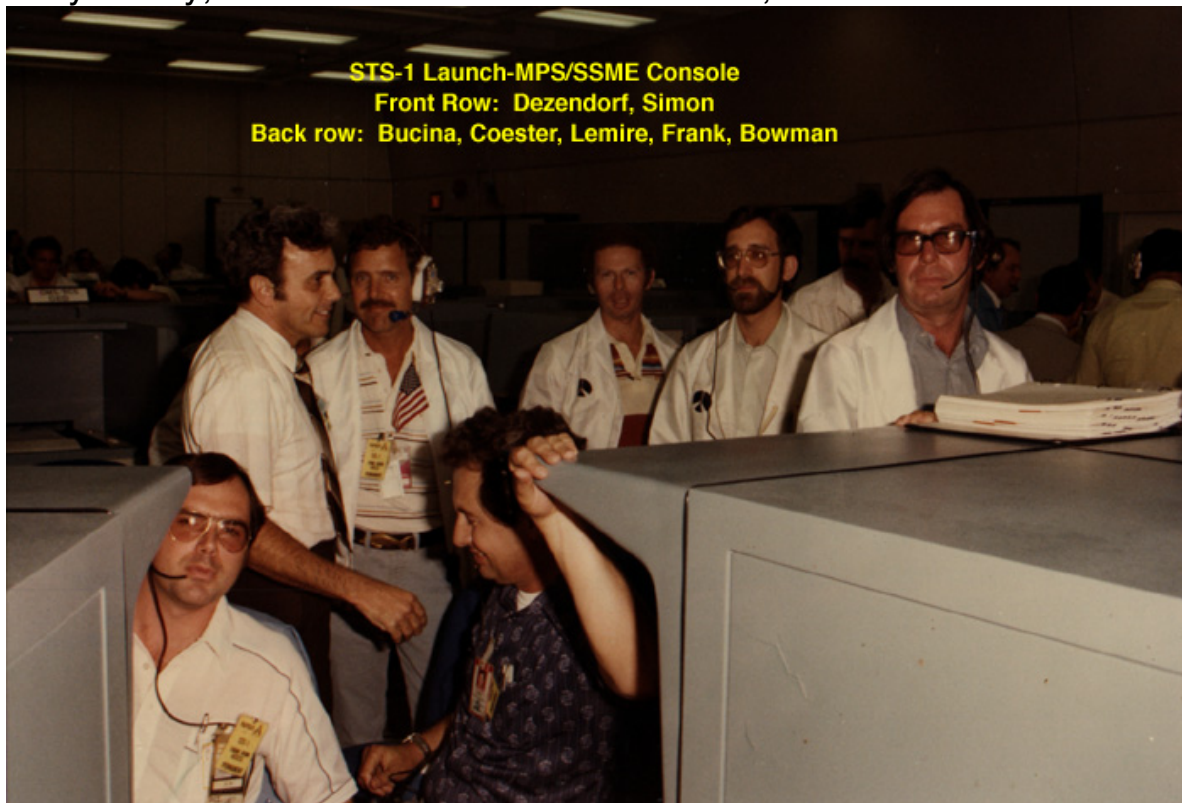
[Return to main page](#)

[Return to Beginning](#)

1978-1997 Rockwell International/Boeing Space Shuttle

I was at KSC interviewing with Rockwell and James Walker/ Walt Antonewski for ECLSS when Bob Bucina saw me and said if I was going to work on Shuttle it would be in Main Propulsion. Bob had been lead engineer on the Liquid Oxygen system on Apollo and we had worked closely together on that program. He was now Manager of MPS. This was in 1978 and we didn't have a Shuttle, any test procedures and no software for the new LPS computerized launch consoles. Many a long hour was spent learning the system and preparing test requirements, system and integrated procedures, and the software to operate, control and monitor everything. Bill Heink was my supervisor and Gary Frank, Bob Bowman and I prepared almost all of the first round of MPS software and test procedures. Roy Austin, Ken Kirkland Dick Carlson were instrumental for the SSME group. It was amazing that everything came together to support a STS-1 launch in 1981. By that time I was Supervisor of Main Propulsion/SSME and remained in that position until Lockheed won the Launch Processing Contract. I stayed with Rockwell as the MPS System Specialist along with Ken Smith, and later Larry Fineberg,

Gary Shirey, Tom Thorson and now astronaut, Frank Caldeiro.



I'll always remember the first Dry CDDT (Countdown Demonstration Test). It took weeks to get through the Count. Now it is routinely a half day test. Also during Dry CDDT in March 1981 where two men were killed after being cleared into the aft fuselage before the inerting nitrogen had been removed. The major fire that virtually enveloped the Space Shuttle after a SSME main fuel valve failed to close following engine abort. Inadvertently dry spinning the LH2 recirculation pumps to 40000 rpm before STS-1, and overpressurizing the MPS helium tanks to almost 6000 psi (4000 psi normal). The discovery of out of round disconnect seals that caused leaks on both 17 inch disconnects and required a roll back to separate the Orbiter from the ET to repair. Developing the leak isolation test that checked out the whole MPS at one time, a major step in reducing processing time. The Big Bangs that shook the whole shuttle stack, blamed on creaky MPS expansion joints but later proven to be caused by TSM (Tail Service Mast) struts. The major modifications to the Orbiter-ET 17 inch disconnects after they slammed closed during flow testing. Removing a leaky Gox disconnect and discovering broken

belleville washers. Endless meetings to ensure all criticalities were properly categorized. The same for the OMRSD (Requirements Document). Working with the most excellent engineers at KSC, Houston and Rockwell Downey. Solving problems with John Tribe, Horace Lamberth, Bill Heink, Bob Lang, Phil Cota, Hugh Brasseaux, Don Previtt, Dave Rigby, Harv LeBlanc, Don Jones, Jay Yohinaga, Tom Shupe, Herb Wolfson, John Kremer, Bill Marumoto, Charlie Sosa, Lee Solid, John Sterritt, John Plowden and so many others. Dick Carlson for helping me spell SSME and understand its workings. The whole PSIG (Propulsion Systems Integration Group). Most significantly, the Challenger Explosion which brought the program and all of us to our knees, only to rise again to greater accomplishments. Getting to know John Young before his first historic Shuttle flight. Working with the Test Conductors and Test Directors who did a fantastic job of integrating everything into a workable Countdown. Being a part of the finest Launch Team on Earth. There were so many challenges and always the team came up with solutions.

During my service I was awarded the Silver Snoopy by Astronaut Jim Newman, the Rockwell President's Award (twice), the NASA Manned Space Flight Safety Award, and numerous NASA Achievement Awards.

The Challenger accident affected us all and after that the job lost much of its thrill for me. The last few minutes of each subsequent countdown was very emotionally trying for me and made my decision to retire in 1997 much easier.

Over the years I helped launch 115 vehicles into Space, all from the Firing Room or Blockhouse. When I think of the twists and turns in our paths, I still say, "I can't think of anywhere else I'd rather have been."

[Return to Space Shuttle text](#)

[Return to main text](#)

Appendix 7

A Space Shuttle Story

Stephen Coester '63

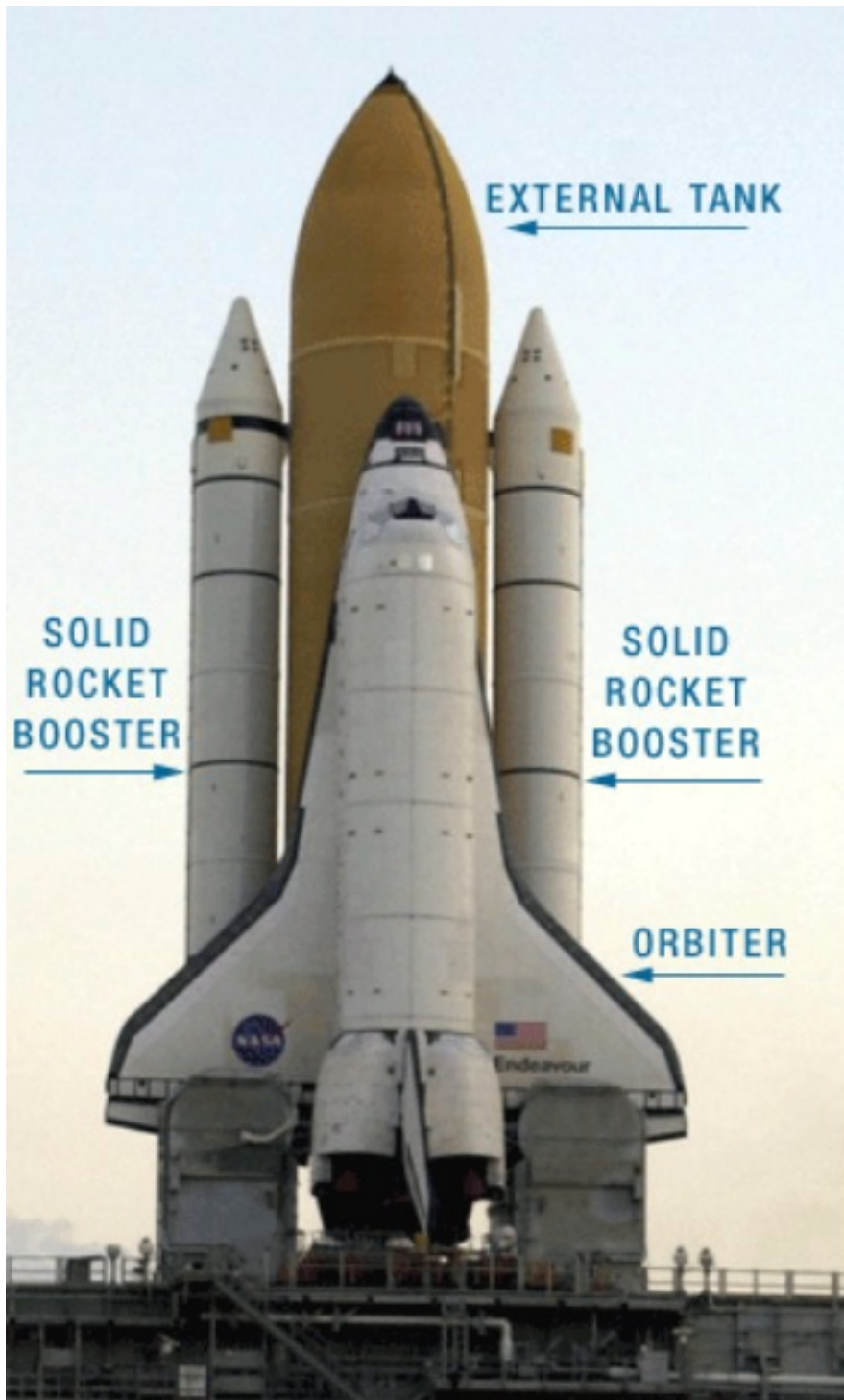
I had several nice comments about my Apollo 11 story so I'm going to share one from thirty or so years later concerning an episode that ended up with my being the first individual recipient of the Manned Spaceflight Safety Award along with five other NASA and contractor engineers.

Every day the technicians, engineers and quality control personnel at Kennedy Space Center conduct tests, fix problems and make modifications. Every action is to provide the greatest margin of safety for the astronauts who will ride the Space Shuttle. This story is little different from hundreds of others performed by the dedicated personnel who worked on the Space Shuttle.



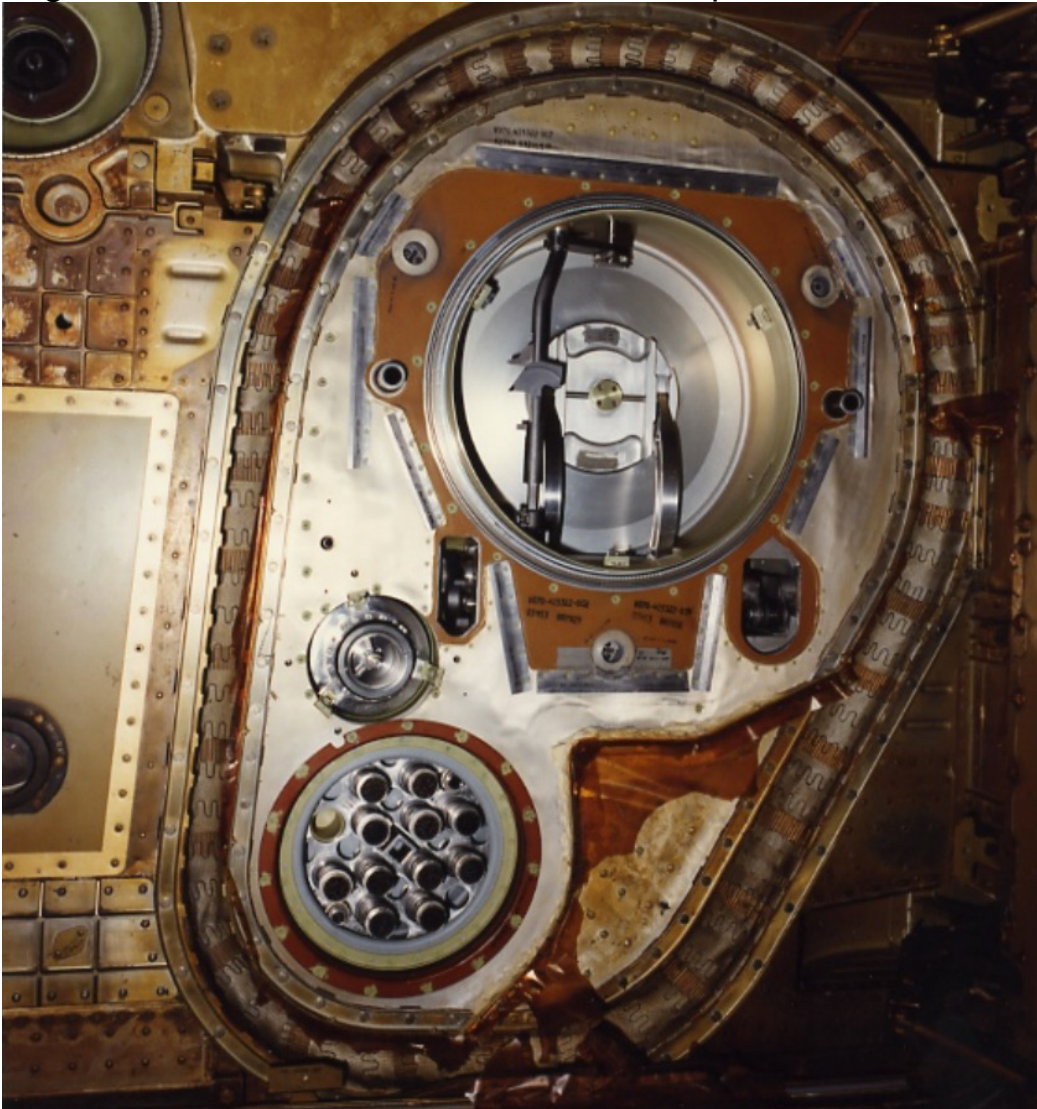
By this time I was a Rockwell System Specialist for the Main Propulsion System (MPS) after having been the MPS Engineering Supervisor since the first Shuttle flight in 1981.

I'm going to try to keep this from getting too technical, but that will be difficult. As most of you know, the Space Shuttle is assembled in pieces with first the two large solid rocket boosters being built up on the mobile launcher. Then the big orange external tank is lifted and mated to the boosters. Finally the orbiter is lifted and mated to the external tank and all connections between the orbiter and the tank are joined together. All this occurs in the Vertical Assembly Building (VAB) and system checks are performed prior to moving the whole stack the three miles to the launch pad.



For the Main Propulsion System these checks leak check the connections between the orbiter and the external tank which are located on two large umbilical plates one for liquid oxygen and one for liquid hydrogen. The LOX plate on the orbiter is shown and mates to a similar plate on the external tank. The umbilicals are held together by three explosive bolts that go through the three holes around the

large valve in the brown area shown in the photo.



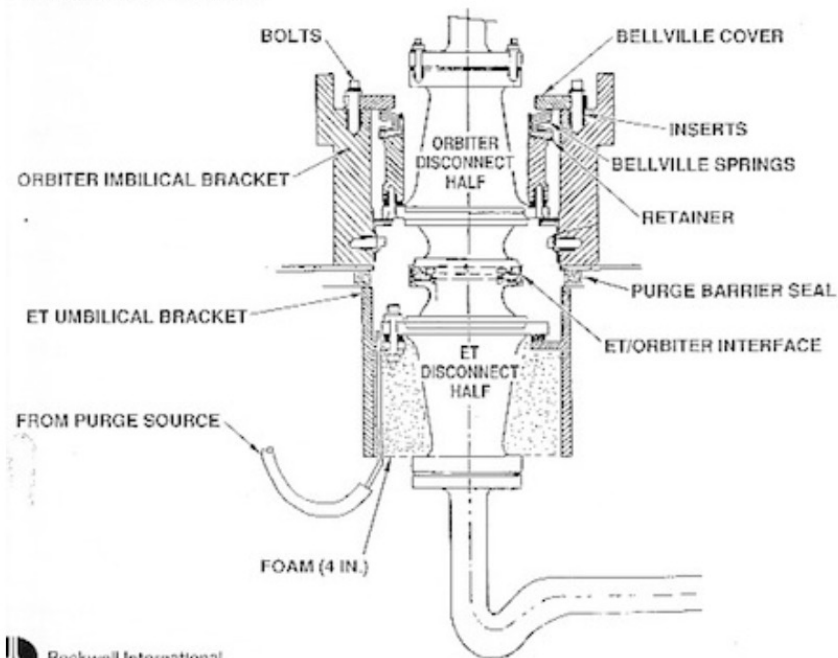


This story concerns the smaller valve to the left in the photo. It is known as the Gaseous Oxygen two inch disconnect and its purpose is to direct high temperature, high pressure gas at 400 psig from the Space Shuttle Main Engines (SSME) to the top of the Liquid Oxygen tank to pressurize the LOX tank during flight. Here's a schematic of the two inch disconnect.

COMPONENT: DISCONNECT, GH_2/GO_2 ORBITER TO TANK
PRESSURIZATION SYSTEM

(MC2B4-0391)

" DISCONNECT) TYP INSTL.



Rockwell International
Space Transportation
Systems Division

23-5

Okay now you are a Space Shuttle expert. The pre-rollout test for this assembly consists of a simple leak check of the interface between the two disconnect halves at the joint indicated as ET/Orbiter Interface on the photo. Because of external tank pressure limitations it is conducted at only 20 psig instead of its operating pressure of 400 psig. The allowable leak rate is a miniscule .29 scims, which won't mean much to you but picture perhaps a pea sized chunk of gas leaking per minute.

So we ran the test and while I don't remember the exact leakage, we flunked the test, although just barely. A problem report was written and analysis began. In the meantime management decided that the "stack" could be moved to the launch pad, which happened the next morning. I had recommended that we don't move to the pad because in all the previous Space Shuttle missions we had never experience any leakage at this joint, but I was overruled.

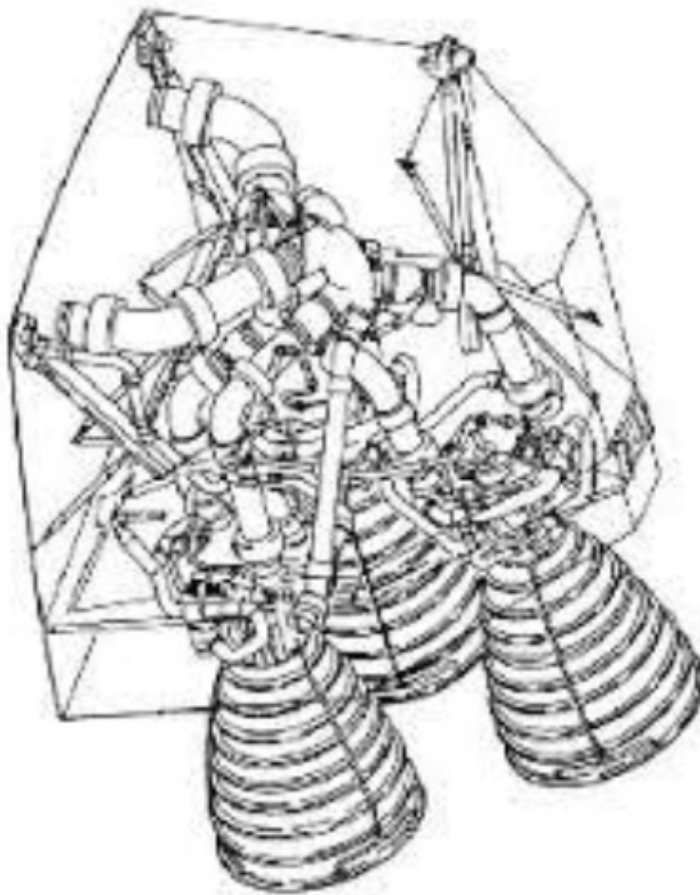
The design agency and NASA did their analysis and decided that the leakage we saw was acceptable for flight. I couldn't accept their reasoning because the test pressure was so far below the operating pressure and that we had never before seen any leakage. I wrote a

letter to my management saying that I wouldn't sign off on acceptance of the leak.

By this time I had a pretty good reputation in the MPS community so management took a second look and decided we would have to look further into the problem. The big problem now was that the Shuttle was now on the launch pad and in order to disassemble the umbilical the Shuttle would have to be returned to the Vertical Assembly building and the orbiter removed from the external tank, which would cause a significant hit to the launch schedule.

I took a long look at the engineering drawings and proposed that it might be possible to do the disassembly in an unorthodox manner from inside the orbiter rather than externally. With help from my NASA and contractor engineers we developed a plan to try the removal while still connected to the external tank and still at the launch pad.

Here's a schematic of the orbiter aft fuselage.



The work area would be at that big pipe right at the top. What isn't

shown is that area is a mass of pipes, tubing and wires where it is almost impossible to even get a hand or tool into the required area. As a System Specialist my job was to be a design representative and advisor to the current launch contractor. But in this case everyone agreed this was my baby, so I prepared the troubleshooting plan and it was decided I would direct the removal operation.

I asked for and was assigned the world's best technician and I can't even remember his name. He should have received all the accolades after the job was done.

The technician and I crawled into the aft fuselage and wormed our way to the disconnect area. The tech reclined on a temporary work platform and reaching full arm length into the maze of tubing sequentially removed the bolts holding in the item called "bellville cover" on the schematic. I crouched beside him directing his actions and modifying the plan as we proceeded. Finally after hours of excruciating painstaking work by this dedicated technician we removed the cover.

What we found astonished us all. The belleville springs whose purpose was to provide 5000 pounds of pressure to seal the disconnect halves were cracked in half. This meant their sealing force was completely compromised and that when subjected to flight temperatures and pressures might have failed completely spraying high pressure oxygen into the aft fuselage and possibly causing a destructive explosion.

This all resulted in a redesign of the springs before putting it all back together and thankfully a safe return to flight.

At a large gathering in Cocoa Beach I was presented with the Manned Spaceflight Safety Award by the NASA Administrator Dick Gregory and received several other awards and perks such as a trip to Johnson Space Center in Houston where Yvonne and I were feted. I also met this young lady who looked like a recent college grad named Eileen Collins. Turned out she was a new un-flown astronaut who would later become the first female Space Shuttle Commander! I was surprised at all the attention and just considered it part of the job and was thankful that management finally listened to my concerns. A funny sequel to this story is that after receiving the award from Administrator Dick Gregory, as I turned to exit the stage, I fell off of it about three feet to a concrete floor. I was holding the spear pointed

award as I fell and it passed between my arm and chest. I was hurt slightly from the fall but fortunately not speared. Nobody even noticed my fall as they were all returning to the bar. I could just picture the headline in the newspaper: " Space Scientist stabbed by Safety Award!".

Sorry for all the technical details.



[Return to main text](#)

[Return to Beginning](#)

Appendix 8

Yvonne and Steve Coester's Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary





June 21, 1963 -2013

Fifty years have come and gone in a flash with two kids, three grandchildren, four dogs, about twenty cats and a couple of fish. A lifetime of great experiences together: camping and SCUBA diving and skiing all over the world. Traveling to exotic destinations in Mexico, Europe, Australia, Alaska, Central America, Hawaii and the Caribbean. It's been a great run.



k

In December 1961 Steve was a third year midshipman at the U.S. Naval Academy.

Yvonne had just turned nineteen and had come to America from her home in Sweden after a year spent obtaining her Green Card. She had known for years she wanted to come to the USA to work in the fashion industry.



She was living in NYC on 44th Street with three other young ladies, one of which was dating a midshipman. She was asked to be a blind date for a Naval Academy exchange weekend at the Military Academy at West Point. She had a date with one of Steve's friends whom she dated several times along with a few other midshipmen. Flash forward to June Week of 1962. Steve's friend who had his real

girlfriend down in South Carolina asked Steve if he wanted to take Yvonne to the June Week festivities and the Class of 1963 Ring Dance. Steve had never met Yvonne nor any other Swede, was pretty shy and said no thanks so another classmate agreed to take her. Steve invited an old high school friend from St. Louis instead. All the girls were in the same cabin in the Sherwood Forest section of Annapolis taken that date. She was the prettiest thing he'd ever seen.



During June Week it was obvious the Yvonne and Steve really liked each other, but the week ended and everyone went their separate ways. While Steve was on his one month of summer leave in St. Louis the girl he had taken to June Week casually asked if he had written to Yvonne because she really liked him. He said no but decided to send her a card with his photo and asking if he could visit her in New York after his naval cruise to Spain, France and Italy. After the cruise ended in late August they finally got together for a weekend in

New York with other classmates and their dates and that was the start of a whirlwind romance.



They dated a couple of times in Annapolis and a couple of times in

New York and had football weekends for the Notre Dame and Army games in Philadelphia.





After a formal dance at Annapolis with Yvonne in a beautiful gown and Steve in full dress blues they became "pinned" when Steve gave Yvonne his class crest



December of 1962 came and Yvonne had to return home to Stockholm after her year in the States. Before she left, Steve asked her to marry him after just six dates. They wouldn't see each other for

six months until he graduated in June 1963.

Steve sent Yvonne the engagement ring, a miniature of his class ring to her home in Sundbyberg, Sweden. The little ring was in a big box cushioned with rolls of good American toilet paper. That won over Yvonne's parents because European toilet paper was like butcher paper.



Both Yvonne and Steve were great letter writers so almost every day a letter would arrive in Annapolis and Stockholm with the news from two weeks ago. Back then people didn't call long distance as it was very expensive and there was no email.

Shortly before Steve's graduation, Yvonne got cold feet because of relentless pressure from her Dad not to marry that American. Finally Steve phoned her and they agreed that after he graduated he would go to Stockholm and they would decide whether to go through with the wedding. Another complication was Steve was nominated for a two year Rhodes Scholarship at Oxford University and that required the recipient to be single. "Luckily" for the wedding Steve didn't get the scholarship.

He went to Sweden and they looked at each other and said yes! They spent an idyllic week on the Swedish island of Öland and the wedding was definitely on.

On Midsummers Eve June 21, 1963 they were wed in a little chapel

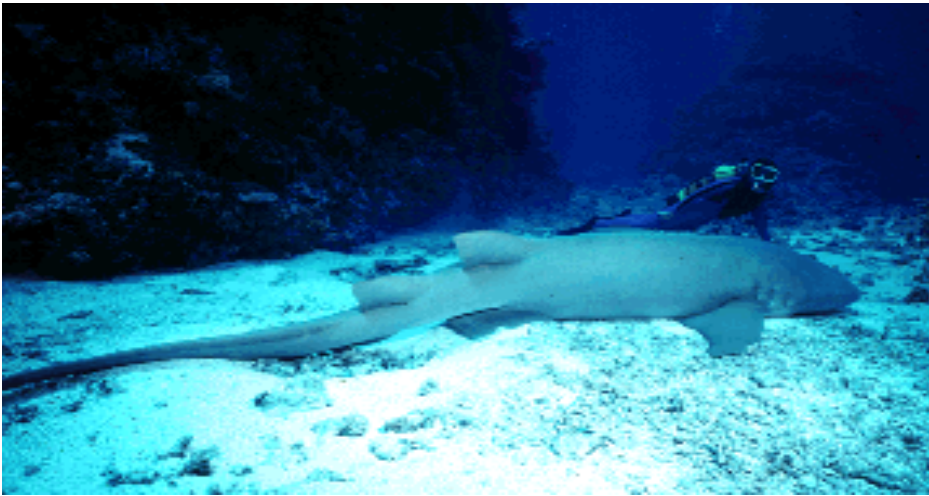
in Sundbyberg, Sweden. A honeymoon in Olso, Norway followed by a flight back to the USA where married life began.



[Return to main text](#)
[Return to Beginning](#)

Appendix 9

Steve's Shark and Cave Adventure



In 1975 Eugenie Clark established her reputation as a marine biologist when she led a National Geographic expedition to film the sleeping sharks in the caves of Yucatan. Until this time it was generally believed that sharks had to continuously swim to force water through their gills allowing them to breath. Unknown to the world in about 1970 I found a cave full of motionless sharks. I was not a biologist and whereas I had heard the supposed fact that sharks had to always swim and was surprised to find them lying still in a cave, I presumed it was a well known fact. I had to laugh when I later saw the National Geographic discovery.

I was on a KSC Barracudas dive trip for a week in the Bahamas. We were north of Andros Island right at the western edge of the Tongue of the Ocean where depths drop precipitously from ten feet to several thousand. I was diving in about eighty feet of water

spearfishing for the boat's supper. I suddenly noticed a large grouper swim past me with a chunk torn from its side probably from somebody's blotched spear shot. I followed the injured fish until it disappeared under a coral ledge. I kicked over to the ledge and ducked my head into the foot high opening trying to see the grouper in the almost total darkness. Suddenly I sensed motion on either side of me and withdrew from the hole to see two large eight foot nurse sharks swimming away. This freaked me out a little so I looked up and saw a swimmer snorkling on the surface. I swam up and he said, "What was that all about?", recounting that he had seen me enter the cave and two sharks coming out and disappearing.

Well I figured the sharks were gone so I could go back and finish off that injured fish so I returned to the depths. I again stuck my head in the hole and saw that it extended back beyond where I could see. I also saw my grouper patiently sitting there about ten feet in. I let loose with my spear and made a clean hit all the way through the fish. It thrashed and suddenly pulled off of my spear and disappeared. I couldn't understand this until I saw my barbed spear point resting on the sand about twelve feet inside the cave. It had unscrewed from the spear shaft and the fish had pulled off.

This was my only spear point so I decided I'd try to retrieve it. I started to worm my way into the cave only to discover that the cave roof was too low to allow me and my tank to squeeze in. No problem, I released my tank straps and took off the tank keeping the regulator firmly in my mouth. Now I could slip into the cave with my mask digging into the sand and my back scraping the cave roof. Not too smart, but I was young and indestructible. I got within arm's reach of the spear point, the object of this whole exercise. As I reached out for the point what do I see about a foot beyond the point but a nose and teeth of a shark looking right at me.

Suddenly there was a great deal of turbulence and the sand swirled causing visibility to go to zero. There was no way I could move being wedged in so tightly. I waited to die. Gradually the sand settled and I could see again and I was still in one piece. The spear point was still where it was the last time I had seen it, but now instead of the shark's snout, I saw the long curved tail next to the point. I thought, what the heck I've made it this far inched in the final foot and grabbed the spear point from under that shark's tail.

Now all I had to do was figure out how to extricate myself as I was pretty well wedged in. As I turned my head hither and yon, I was amazed to see several other sharks sitting motionlessly in the recesses of the cave. I slid myself slowly backwards pulling my tank along with me and managed finally to get out of the cave. In retrospect how stupid the whole thing was. I was buddyless and could have easily snagged something on the cave ceiling that would have caused me to be stuck until I ran out of air and drowned or became shark food. I wouldn't have returned to the boat and being totally out of sight in the cave probably never would have been found. Another mystery of the Bermuda Triangle.

But it all worked out and I kept that old rusty spear point in my tackle box for years as a talisman of my good luck on that day. One day years later another diver needed a point and I reluctantly lent him that one. Again it unscrewed from his shaft and this time was lost forever. I was crushed to have it gone, but obviously I still have the memory.

Steve Coester 2001

[Return to main text](#)

[Return to Beginning](#)

Appendix 10

Yvonne and the Giant Shark



Yvonne looked beautiful. She also looked scared as she steadied herself on the gently rocking boat. The dive gear was piled around her feet and she was trying to remember how to hook the regulator to the SCUBA tank. Today was to be her first dive into the ocean depths and you could tell by looking at her she was having second thoughts. How had she gotten to this point?

The year was 1972. The Viet Nam war was in full swing. We had landed men on the moon, brought them safely home, and become bored that they weren't doing more up there. The pill had released women from their sexual bonds and the age of free love was upon us. We had produced the standard two children and were approaching that hardest of all birthdays, number thirty. I had started

diving five years earlier and for awhile would blithely leave the wife and kids at home to go diving. Then Yvonne started noticing other marriages breaking up among our diving friends. The culprit was always that hubby had met a sweet young thing who shared the diving experience. The stories about ship board romances are true, and it's easy to fall in love on a balmy Bahamas evening drinking rum and watching the falling stars from the deck of a seductively swaying deck. Not that I had ever been tempted by the smooth skin, the heaving breasts, the flaxon hair and tiny bikinis of the nubile young maidens that joined us on our dives. Well maybe once or twice.

At any rate Yvonne decided that if you can't beat 'em, you better join 'em, and for a couple of years she came along on the trips just for the ride. She'd sunbathe, swim a little, float in a tube and look distainingly at the idiots carrying all those tons of gear to actually go under the water. She was happy and I was happy because I was still able to go diving and no longer had to fend off the hoards of single women lusting for my body. In my dreams. Well this went on for quite some time . Then surfacing from one of my dives, Yvonne's first words to me were, "Well, you idiots keep doing it so there must be something down there. I think I'll take some lessons". Well I practically fell back into the ocean I was so surprised.

You have to understand that Yvonne was barely a swimmer. She grew up in Stockholm, Sweden where it's just too damn cold to swim much. She could do the classic European breast stroke, and believe it or not, had never put her head under water in twenty-nine years of living. After we returned from that dive trip, we went down to the O-Club pool. I tossed a penny into the shallow end and told her to dive down into the three foot depths and pick it up. Well, Yvonne looked at me like I was stark raving mad and made some remark about getting her hair wet. I instinctively knew dive training was going to be an interesting experience for both of us.

Actually once we changed instructors (the first one thought he was a drill sergeant) she did pretty well in the pool. Her lovely blond hair turned chlorine green for the first time in her life and she learned the fundamentals of snorkeling and SCUBA. The class work was a different story. First, English is a second language for Yvonne. Second she has a long lasting aversion to anything mathematical. At that time the geniuses that came up with the

SCUBA courses thought that you should be a nuclear physicist to dive so the courses made you learn Boyle's Law, Bernoulli's Principle, Henry's Law, etc., etc. As if when you were 150 feet under the water you were going to pull out your sliderule and perform algebraic calculations to determine that you had just taken your last breath of air out of the tank. Needless to say, she hated the course, almost quit ten times in ten weeks and still didn't think much of this putting your head under water. Somehow she passed both written and swimming tests. We still think it was more because of how she filled her bikini than by the answers on the test.

After a checkout dive in a Florida spring, she was ready for the ocean. I got her geared up, had her spit in her mask, and we were ready to go. Yvonne jumped in and headed for the bottom which was a long sixty feet away. When I got down she was already waiting for me at the bottom. It turns out that she can easily clear her ears continuously while descending. I have to descend, stop, clear, descend and so forth, so she always beats me to the bottom. I gave her the old thumbs up sign and she smiled and returned it. Things were looking up. This really was going to work. We were going to be dive buddies. We kicked around for a few minutes enjoying the beautiful corals, the tropical fish, and the canyon like crevices. Then I saw a eating size grouper and became Steve the Hunter. I fired a spear at the fish and to my dismay missed. As I was reeling in the line between spear and gun, I glanced back at Yvonne. She was frozen in fear with her eyes completely filling her mask. I looked, and swimming by us no more than twenty feet away was the god damndest biggest shark I had ever seen in my life. Let me dispel a myth about diving. Really, really you seldom ever see a shark while you're down there. Much less a monster like this one.

This big fella was a hammerhead. I have no idea how big it really was, but underwater with the natural magnification from the dive mask, it looked to be at least fifteen feet long. The most impressive thing about this fish was that it was as wide as a fifty gallon drum with a big belly. It looked like it could swallow a diver without even chewing him up first. Never in my previous five years of diving had I ever seen it's equal.

About this time Yvonne came out of her frozen state and decided that she'd had just about enough diving for that day or for that

life. Remember "The Deep" where the heroine suddenly goes clawing for the surface. That was how Yvonne reacted. Suddenly she was racing upward, anything to get away from the monster. I reached up as she swam by me and grabbed her by the ankle and yanked her back down into the crevice where I was cowering. I signaled that we were a lot safer down in this hole than floating up on the surface where we'd be easy prey.

The shark continued to drift past us. I am convinced it had one eye turned toward us deciding if we were going to be its next meal. As it went by I started to relax a little thinking we were out of the woods (perhaps a poor analogy). Then suddenly the monster turned and glared at us. I'd like to say my life passed in front of my eyes, but actually I think I just peed. My spear gun was unloaded, not that it would have affected this big fish. It would have been like shooting a grizzly with a peashooter. We were defenseless. Finally after an eternity of playing stare down the shark, it whisked its tail and disappeared into the gloom.

Now I had a decision to make. I knew I was mildly frightened so Yvonne had to be terrified. I figured that if she surfaced now that would be the end of her fledgling life as a mermaid. She was frantically making signals to go up and I was trying to calm her and continue the dive. The next thirty minutes passed uneventfully, although, I spent a lot of time twisting my neck looking for that shark. Finally I allowed her to return to the boat.

What thanks did I get for first saving her life from a girl-eating shark and then touring the reef with her? None, and that's putting it mildly. I got the tongue lashing of our previously happy nine years of wedded bliss, and was told in no uncertain terms that she had wasted time, money and almost lost her life, and was absolutely never going to do anything so stupid again, ever!

A couple of hours later after satisfying our required surface interval so we wouldn't get the bends, I built up the nerve to speak to her again and politely inquired if she was ready for her second ocean dive. To my surprise, she declined. There is just no understanding women. I judged that discretion was the better part of valor and said I'd just take a short dive by myself and report back on what I saw. And, that one almost never sees sharks. I had my dive and darned if I didn't see another shark. This was a small one, nothing

like Moby Shark. When I surfaced, Yvonne asked how it was and did I see any sharks. Sometimes a little white lie is justified so I said, "Darling, there's not another shark in the whole darn ocean. It was a beautiful dive with glorious little fish and colorful corals and that Cousteau would give his left flipper for a chance to dive this place." She was unimpressed by my enthusiasm.

The next day I geared up and was ready to dive alone when Yvonne said, "Hey, wait for me, I guess I'll try it again". There really is no understanding women.

Steve Coester 2001

Jerry Thornton who read the above account and who was on this trip with us sent the following:

I certainly can verify this story. I have told it many times myself, although not as eloquently as you. I would like to add that I had been down with you two with two cameras and had just run out of film with one of the cameras and was on my way back up to the boat when the shark appeared. I did not see it at first until the absence of divers caught my attention. Then I saw the air bubbles coming out of the trenches in the reef. All the divers were hiding. One of the divers stuck his head out when he saw me and made "chomping" motions with his hand. I turned and saw the shark circling you and Yvonne with her cowering behind you. I suddenly thought of myself as shark bait halfway up to the boat and all by myself. I raced on up to the boat, told the divemaster what was happening and asked for the bang stick. He gave it to me and I headed for the back of the boat. I never made it to the water! All the divers were clambering aboard over each others backs like a Keystone! Cops movie. I also remember that we were missing one diver. One of the guys had wandered off by himself as usual. About 20 minutes later he showed up and could not understand what the excitement was about. Ah, the good old days!! Life is so boring now.

Jerry T.

[Return to main text](#)

[Return to Beginning](#)

Appendix 11

Grabbed By An Octopus



Yvonne and I were on a dream trip to Maui and along with bike riding down Mount Haleakala and driving the Road to Hana decided to go SCUBA diving. While submerged the leader pointed out an octopus in a hole. I thought I might be able to grab it and pull it out so I reached into the hole which wasn't much wider than my hand. Suddenly I was in to my elbow and the octopus had grabbed me instead of vice versa. I pulled and it pulled and I was losing. I had visions of being stuck there until I ran out of air or someone cut off my arm. Also I could picture that wicked beak starting to rip my flesh. Finally I managed to wrench my arm free and it was covered with silver dollar sized suction marks. That critter was a lot larger than I thought. Live and learn, although I seem to be a slow learner.

Love Affair With a Moray Eel



Here's a surreal tale from one of our SCUBA dives in Cozumel. I had noticed one of our Mexican guides coaxing a spotted moray out of its hole and decided to try it. I took off my glove and gently waved it in front of a moray eel. Sure enough it came part way out of the hole to investigate. It looked so relaxed that I reached out to touch its side and then to pet it. The eel then swam totally out of the hole and began to swim by me rubbing up against my arms and legs like a house cat. I put my hands on both of its sides and stroked it and we had several very special moments of love in the depths. An ironic postscript was that the next day when we showed up at the dive boat, the guide that started it all had his hand heavily bandaged. He had been badly bitten by a moray eel.

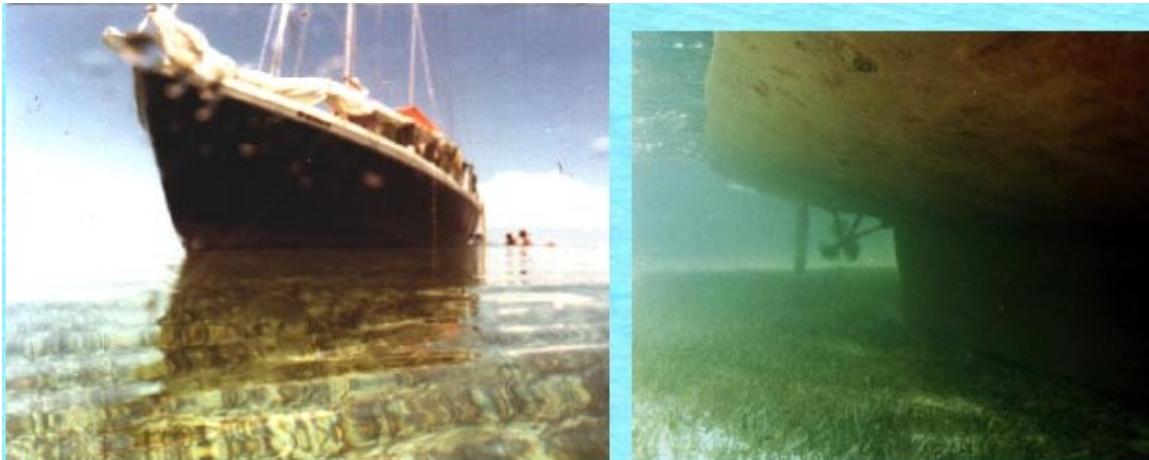
[Return to main text](#)

[Return to Beginning](#)

Appendix 12

Aground at Sea

A Poem by Steve Coester



Background: It was July 14, 1981 which just happened to be my 40th birthday. Yvonne, Dean and I were on the Shark XII, a fifty foot bareboat charter sailboat with about twelve other SCUBA divers captained by Leon Dufresne. The trip was a planned two weeker out of Government Cut, Miami with some of the divers staying for the whole time and some flying back to the U.S. from Andros while others flew into Andros for the second week. We had sailed out of Miami on July 12 after fighting generator problems all the previous night. Had some great dives at the Gingerbread Grounds where we had a good Mako shark experience after spending the night at Great Issac Light where we climbed the light and took some of the old lenses. The night of the 13th we were sailing across the flats to get to Chub Cay and were using a LORAN receiver for the first time to ensure we didn't get out of the channel which is narrow and no more than ten feet deep. Alas, we didn't know that the LORAN accuracy was degraded in the Bahamas and we ended up aground miles from anywhere. We were aground for at least two tide changes and were beginning to fear that we'd be there forever. We attempted digging

around the hull, warping the anchor, and even used the air compressor to try to blow away the substrate from around the boat. all to no avail. Finally after about twelve hours of sitting on a canted boat the tide leveled us out and barely floated us. We sent Dean up to the mast head and I stood at the bow with a lead line checking the depth. Leon steered per Dean's guess of where lay the deepest water. After going aground a few more times we finally got to deep water. The next morning at 0400 I penned this poem.

The Poem

As we sailed the Ocean boundless
Any fears would be quite groundless.
The seas were calm and skies were clear
A gentle rocking eased all fears.

But things can change for those who sail
As this epic shall soon regale.
For the best of parties can turn sour
And it seemed that now became OUR hour.

We sailed on and on into the night
Without landfall or view of a light.
Until at four we changed our course
And things became a whole lot worse.

We knew we were near our goal
When the lookout said, "Bless my soul"
"I see a light out in that place
Soon we'll finish our little race"

So we headed toward the blinking
Of our fate we had no inkling.
Like sheep heading to their kill
Soon we'd swallow our bitter pill.

The light that pulled us toward its glow
Really meant don't come, but go.

For what we saw was blinking red
Enter here and end up dead.

The Shark continued in its folly
And moods became much less jolly.
Can there be a more horrible sound
Than when a ship runs aground?

We felt a shake and heard a grinding
Our progress stopped, we were binding
Upon the sand and in the shallow
That was the pill we had to swallow.

The boat was caught by outgoing tide
So we had some time with which to abide.
Some would swim and some would worry,
The useless thing would be to hurry.

The tide comes in and tide goes out
More in a whisper than a shout.
As the day was getting late
All we could do was wait, wait, wait.

The sun was hot and often glaring
We fought to keep tempers from flaring.
Caught upon a sandy slope
We were mad and without hope.

Ever so slowly the tide came in
We wondered have we paid for our sins?
Will the Master in the sky
Release our bonds so we can fly.

Finally after many hours
Of digging with all our power
The sea lifted us off the sand
So we could sail to the good land.

Well even that was not so easy
And as I tell this I feel queasy.
Because as we looked all around
What we saw was mostly ground.

My son high up on the mast
Said, "I see a way at last."
So we followed Dean's direction
And came upon our resurrection.

It happened on Steve's birthday
A day to remember in many ways.
Now we'll do some serious driving
So we can catch up on our diving.

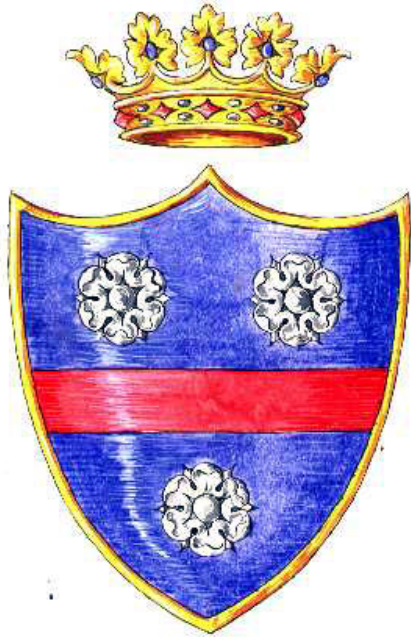
Steve Coester 1981

That wasn't the end of our adventures that trip. At Green Cay we noticed about thirty people waving to us from the shore of this uninhabited island. They were Hatian refugees who had been dropped off by a person smuggler. We felt we had to help them although it was impossible to take thirty of them on board, and we were leary of them. We rowed the dingy in and gave them water and food. At Congo Town, Andros we mentioned them to the head man and requested he notify Nassau so they could be rescued. He replied, "No mon, if we call Nassau they'll just come out and machine gun them." True or not I'll never forget that. I have no idea what happened to those poor folks. At the end of our week we flew back and the pilot let Dean, who had just soloed, fly us back to Merrit Island.

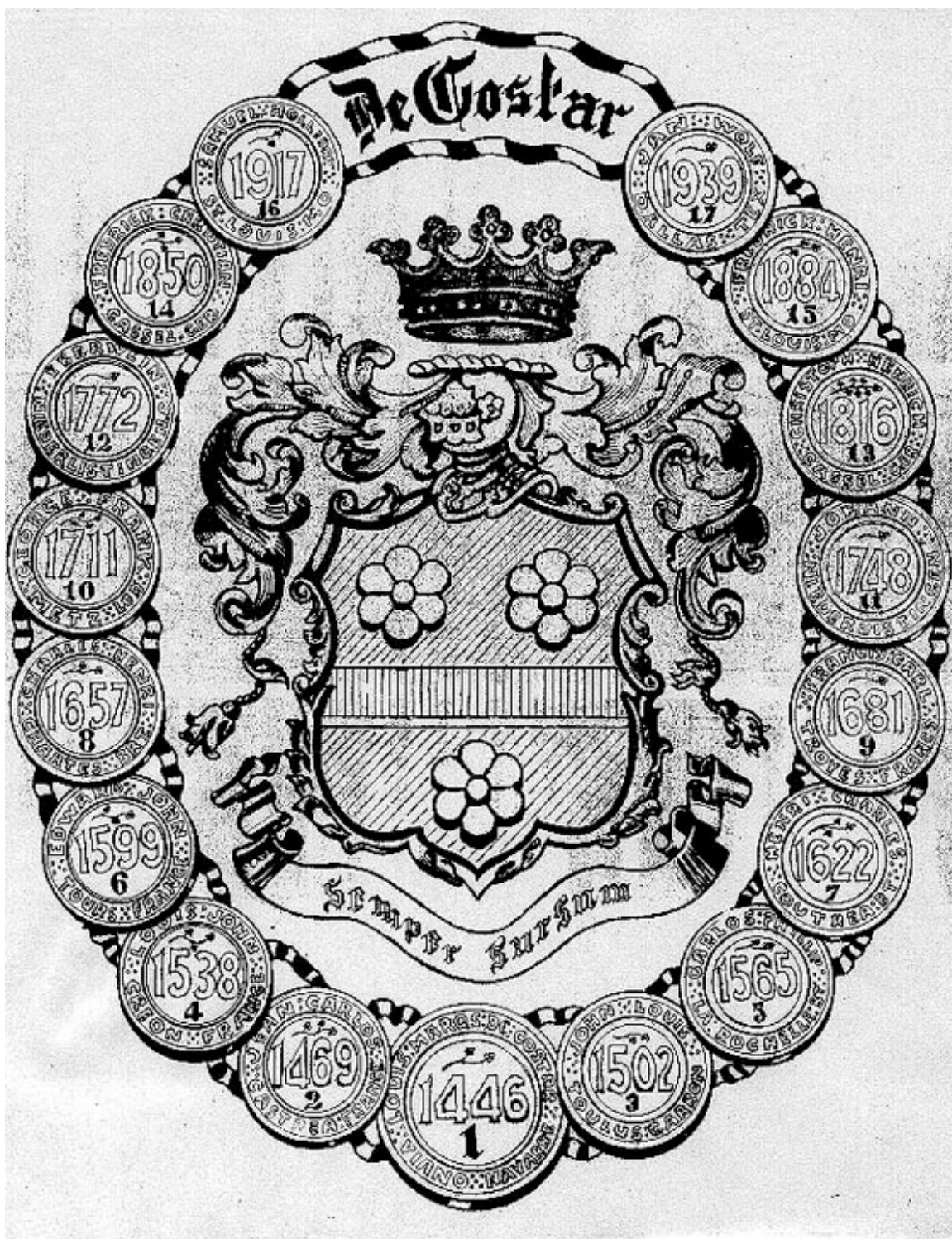
[Return to main text](#)

[Return to Beginning](#)

Appendix 13 Coester Genealogy



Coester Coat of Arms



Coat of Arms listing all first sons back to 1446

Research by my nephew Dan Coester:
My stambuch is a copy made in the early 1800's and brought to

America at
that time. Since then it was passed down to eldest son to eldest son
..
until I received it in mid 1980.

When in the Army, I was stationed in Fulda, Germany with the 11th
ACR
(Blackhorse) as a Captain. I flew helicopters while there. When
driving
from Fulda to Frankfurt, I kept passing by the "Coestersche
Apotheke",
translated as "Coester's Pharmacy". I dropped in to meet Conrad
Coester
and his son Conrad. They also had a Stambuch which trace our
roots back to
two brothers who settled in Niederlistingen very similar to mine. The
beginnings were identical which suggests that our stambuchs were
copied
from the same original in early 1800.

My wife and I over the next couple of years met with other Coesters
who
each had similar stambuchs and even went to Niederlistingen to visit
the
Rote Hause as mentioned in the Stambuch. If you ever get the
chance to go
to Germany, I highly recommend the trip. Displayed in the house built
over
the original Rote Hause (Red House) is the wooden ceiling brace with
the
Coester "three roses" engraved into it. The Red House is quite the
legend
in Niederlistingen.

Niederlistingen is a very small, quaint, german village located just
west
of Kassel. What was neat was finding lots of Coesters. The small
church

has the names of Coesters who died in various conflicts over several hundred years. I grew up knowing only my immediate family. My grandfather and my great uncle had a constant debate on how to pronounce our name. My grandfather and I pronounce our name (Kester). My great uncle and his kids now pronounce their name with a long o sound.

Apparently, according to the German Coester's, there are two Coester lines (line A & line B) dependant upon which brother you descend from. My family tree is along line B while the Coester's in Germany very clearly belong to line A.

Our stambuchs are very similar. As the family tree gets older, there is some confusion sorting out the original couple generations. It varies dependant upon which book you read. I believe the confusion comes because of similar names. One same Coester women is seemingly married to different Coester men with the same name but from different generations. Seems like some in-breeding if you believe one of the family trees. One family tree calls out a young Coester (a soldier) who came from somewhere else with the same name. So I think we are talking three different men, not just two. This makes the beginning of the trees hard to reconcile and inconsistent. I would love to go back to Germany now and try to get this worked out.

The family crest and the family origins are also points of contention.

The
lore is that Coester's before Germany were "De Costas" who fled
France
(near Lyon) from Huguenotten persecution. We have pictures of the
female
crest of three roses but no one has yet come across the original male
family
crest which would confirm this lore once and for all. I guess this calls
for a trip to Lyons, France, too.

One Germany Coester is adamant that the Coester name is nothing
more than a
derivative of the Dutch word for "of the church", and that the Coester's
did not come from France. He contends that the original Coesters
were
educated freeman who worked for the church and for royalty in such
fields
as accounting, arithmetic, book-keeping etc. and probably moved to
Niederlistingen from some other place not too far away to avoid the
periodic wars which pillaged this part of Europe.

What is clear is that Coesters in America were 2nd or 3rd sons who
emigrated to the promise of the new world. My great, great, great,
great
grandfather came to America via St. Louis in the 1840's. Other
Coester's
at different times enter America at Portland, Oregon or New York,
New York.

The potential very much exists to complete a very accurate family
book
especially with the aid of the computer.

This account is all written from memory while I sit here at work since
my
records are at home so please excuse factual errors. Give me a few
weeks to
neaten up the Family Tree Maker files and we can then share

specifics.

I look forward to seeing what you all have too. This could be fun.

Dan

More from Dan

Hi to all. I followed up on my last message and thought I'd share. My family book can go back to Johann Justus Coester, born 1747, with ease and is

confirmed by William Coester's family book. My great grand father, Frederick

Henri Coester, 1884, apparently did some research and asserts that our

lineage goes directly back to Charles III of Navarres, 1350. It be interesting if anyone has anyway to confirm this information.

Below I provide some details...

1. I can list may direct descendants as follows

Daniel Wilcox Coester, 3.4.1962, #1 child

+ Angelika Brunhilde Lippke, 2.20.1961. of Fulda, Germany

Jan Wolf Coester, 9.14.1939, #1 child,

+ Bonnie Lu Wilcox, 2.14.1942

Samuel Holliday Coester 1917 - 1993

+ Lois Wolf 1920 - 1985

Frederick Henri Coester 1884 - 1956

+ Florence Alexander Holliday 1892 -

Fredrich Christian Coester 1850 - 1894

+ Emily Augusta Ruff 1855 - 1931

Christoph Heinrich August Coester 1816 - 1878

+ Auguste Breithaupt - 1857

Eberwein Coester 1772 - 1834

*2nd Wife of Eberwein Coester:

+ Catherine Elisabeth Rehrwald

Johann Justus Coester *** 1747/48 - 1824

+Anna Maria Mueller 1753 - 1815

***Note: Johann Justus Coester is listed in both my copy of the family book and the copy I made of a Coester Stammbuch in Germany. This copy is the same copy that William Coester has shared via his CD. According to this 2nd Stammbuch, the next descendants are

George Justus Coester, No 2, Gen II, Pg 103, no dob given.
Stammbuch calls
George the start of Linie B.
Johann Henric Coester, No1, Gen I, Pg 13, no dob given
George Eberweyn Coester, Pg 13, no dob given

However, according to my great grandfather, Frederick Henri Coester, born 1884, the rest of the family tree looks like this.

My family book, entry made and apparently researched by my Great Grand Father, Frederick Henri Coester, states that Johann Justus lineage is as follows

Johann Justus Coester, 1748, #1 child
George Francis Coester, 1711, #4 child
Francis De Costar, 1681, #1 child
Charles Henri De Costar, 1657, #2 child
Henri Charles De Costar- Coutrea, BT, 1622, #3 child
Edward John De Costar - Tours, 1599, #3 child
Charles Phillip De Costar - Marquis, 1565, #2 child
Louis John Greon De Costar - 1538 #2 child
John-Louis of Toulus-Garron, 1502, #2 child
Jean Carlos De Castrea, 1469, #3 child
Louis De Costes - Sieur De Corda, 1446 - FIRST COSTAR
Charles of Viano, 1421
John of Aragon married to Blanche of Navarre, 1402
Charles III, King of Navarre, 1350

Therefore, according to my great, grand father, and I'd like to make some research to confirm and perhaps some you might know, that I am the direct descendant of Charles III, King of Navarre, 1350.

Hope you find this interesting,

Dan

Coester link to the presidents Bush

This is probably of primary interest to Dan, our geneologist, but all of you may be intrigued. Look at the family tree for President Bush.

<http://pickle.gsfc.nasa.gov/uspres/D0001/G0000017.html#l698> .

Notethat Nannie Holliday is George's mother's grandmother. I had been told by Uncle Newt that we were somehow related to Bush, but this is thefirst time I'd seen a tree. The best I can tell Jan and I have a great,

great, great grandfather, Major Joseph Holliday, born about 1790, who fathered Bush's great grandmother, Nannie Holliday. Joseph Holiday also

fathered eight other children, one of whom was Samuel Newton Holliday who is our great, great grandfather and who fathered Joseph Glasly(?) Holliday who would be our great grandfather who fathered FlorenceHolliday who is our grandmother.

I'd say the blood has thinned out quite a bit in all those generations, but there is a direct link.

My grandmother Florence Holliday Coester



Florence's Wedding announcement

Serial was taken to Alton in the machine. His machine is a black touring car. It bore Missouri license No. 12048.

MISS HOLLIDAY AND F. H. COESTER TO WED

Marriage to Precede Change of His Place of Business.

Miss Florence Holliday, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph G. Holliday, of 5137 Washington boulevard, and Frederick H. Coester will be married at 8 o'clock Tuesday evening at the residence of the bride's parents. Dr. Layton Mauze of Central Presbyterian Church will perform the ceremony in the presence of the immediate families of the couple.

A series of pretty coincidents weave themselves around the wedding date, which is the result of a near-elopement planned when Mr. Coester, who is con-

pany, showed his sweetheart they were lunching together at a downtown cafe, a telegram transferring him to Los Angeles, Cal., as assistant to Charles H. Smith, capitalist and director of a large motor truck company of Detroit.

Asked whether she would accompany her fiance, Miss Holliday nodded an affirmative, and the couple was soon speeding to Clayton. Midway there they suddenly returned to the office of Mr. Holliday, in the LaSalle Building, there to get the parental consent.

The couple, both of whom are socially prominent, have been engaged for several months, and there was no objection to the match. However, Mr. Holliday stipulated there must be a "regular" wedding, and the date, Oct. 26, was set. Shortly after making the date, Mr. Coester received a telegram which may mean that he will continue to remain in St. Louis.

Miss Holliday is an attractive young woman, and a graduate of Mary Institute. She is a sister of Mrs. Charles Bacon and Jacob and Sam Holliday.

Mr. Coester, who resides in Compton Heights, is a member of the Century Boat Club, the Sunset Inn Country Club and the Leiderkranz Club. He was a member of Light Battery A, later being appointed to Gen. Harvey G. Clark's staff, and was selected as an aid to attend President Taft's inauguration. He served as librarian for the Amphion Club. After a honeymoon spent in California the couple will decide as to where they will reside, two offers awaiting Mr. Coester's decision.

SUFFRAGISTS ARE TO POST

A Holliday death notice:

'84—Joseph Glasby Holliday died in St. Louis, Mo., on January 22. His death was due to influenza. He was born September 14, 1861, in St. Louis, his parents being Samuel Newton and Maria Fithian (Glasby) Holliday. He entered Yale from Smith Academy in St. Louis. He was a member of Kappa Sigma Epsilon, Psi Upsilon, and Wolf's Head, divided the Scott prize in French, and received an oration Senior appointment. In 1886 he took his LL.B., *magna cum laude*, at Washington University, St. Louis. He afterwards practiced law in that city, at first with his father and later on alone, devoting himself principally to probate matters. In 1907 he was president of the Yale Alumni Association of St. Louis. He was married July 15, 1885, to Harriet Elizabeth Alexander. They had six children; two of the sons are Yale graduates, Samuel N. Holliday, 2d, '08, and Joseph H. Holliday, '13. A daughter is the wife of Charles E. Bascom, ex-'00 S.

The Journal of Joseph Holliday born 1789

[Return to Home](#)

Name: Major Joseph HOLLIDAY

Birth: September 15, 1789 Harrison County, Kentucky

Death: December 17, 1870 Monroe County, Missouri Age: 81

Father: William HOLLIDAY (1755->1811)

Mother: Martha PATTON (~1754-1816)

Autobiography of Joseph Holliday (1861)

Copy annotated by his son, Samuel Newton Holliday, St. Louis, Mo. (1863)
I was born on the fifyeenth (sic) day or September, 1789. in what was then Bourbon Co, Ky., now Harrison Co., about three miles southwest from where Cynthiana now is, on a bluff of Gray's Run, on the south side thereof, just above its mouth.

My father's name was William Holliday. He was born in Ireland, near Londonberry, and came to America when he was seventeen years of age. He came to Pennsylvania where he married Martha Patton. She also came from Ireland, when she was eleven years of age, with her father and mother and a large family of brothers and sisters. When last heard from, two sisters of my mother were living near Urbana, Ohio; one named Nancy Steele, a widow; and, the other named Polly Wright, also a widow. They had a great many children. In the north of Ireland there was a Rebellion, about the year 1772, I think, the rebels belonged to a society named the Hearts of Steele (refer below under "History" for a brief summary of The Hearts of Steel). They rebelled against the government, endeavoring to regain the lost liberty of Ireland, but did not accomplish much. There were a great many of them, but they could not do anything against the British Army. My father was a member of the Hearts of Steele, and as the British Government had detected the movements of the Society, and was endeavoring to ferret out its members, my father escaped in a vessel and came to America, in the year 1772. He had no brothers. He had only one sister I think her name was Martha (her name was June). She (Jane) married her cousin Joseph Holliday in Ireland. They came to America, and settled in Pennsylvania. Her husband, Joseph Holliday, was killed in Pennsylvania by the falling of a tree, which was cut down for a coon. He was holding the dogs, and, the tree falling the wrong way, killed him. They had two children; one son named Samuel, who has a family of children some where in Ohio. Sam was killed a few years ago, not far from Lebanon, Ohio, on Point Creek. He was hauling a load of joice or rafters, and going down hill, the load slipped forward and killed him; His sister died unmarried.

My father's sister married a second husband, named Elliott, who had a son who was a Presbyterian Preacher, and a teacher in a college or Seminary at Allegheny City, Pennsylvania. They had a son who is a Physician, Dr. Elliott. My father died in February 1812. I think it was February. I know it was in 1812; and that it was a short time before war was declared. He was fifty-five years of age at the time of his death.

My father moved to Kentucky after he was married and had three children, I think it was about 1786, three years before I was born. He settled at the place where I was born, on Gray's Run. My father had ten children, five boys and five girls, to-wit: Samuel, William, Sally, Nancy, Martha, Jane, Joseph, Rebecca, James, and John. John died when a small boy. (John Holliday died in

1796 aged 11 months) All are now (1861) dead but three of us, Jane Boyd, who is five years older than I; Rebecca McClintock, who is three years younger than I; and myself.

John Boyd and her husband, Irving Boyd, live in Indiana, about fifty miles from Indianapolis, and one mile south of the railroad that goes from Indianapolis to Maton, Ohio. They have two boys, one named Rankin, and the other, I think, is named Irvin. Irvin lives in Illinois, not far west of Terre Haute, Indiana.

Rebecca McClintock, widow, has three children living. One, William, lives near Indianapolis; another, Martha Patton, widow, has two boys by her first husband, named Nesbit. She resides in Indiana about twenty miles south of Jane Boyd on the railroad that goes from Indianapolis to Cincinnati, at Greensburg. Her mother lives with her. The third child, Joseph McClintock is now (1861) in California, but talks of returning. He has a wife and children. Sister Martha died unmarried, when she was about sixteen years of age.

(Martha Holliday died in 1803 aged 16 years)

Sister Sally died early, but left one daughter, her husband was named Alexander Martin. The daughter has been married several years, I don't know her husband's name. (Sarah Martin died in 1804 aged 20 years)

Brother Samuel died near Pendleton Indiana, on Fall River, about 1845. He left about eight children. William, one of his sons, is a preacher, and resides in Indianapolis. Joseph, a lawyer, died a few years ago, while a member of the Legislature of Indiana. John is dead. Two of the girls live about Pendleton, the rest are all dead. One of the sons had prepared himself for the ministry, and on his return home just after he graduated in Pennsylvania, he died. Brother William died on Grassy Creek, near Louisiana, Pike County, Mo. about the year 1830. He left five boys, William, George, Samuel, James, and Joseph; and one daughter, Martha. Sally, another daughter, died young.

My brother James died near Clinton, Indiana, about 1830. (He died June 8, 1822) He was a carpenter by trade. He built the Cout (sic) House in Eaton, Ohio. He left two daughters and one son. The son, named Patton Holliday, was killed, when about twenty years old, in the time of the Black Hawk War.

(James Patton Holliday died Oct. 18, 1843, aged 20 years & 9 months) He was Lieutenant, and the Military were camping out, drilling at Eaton, Ohio, and tried to play a prank on the guard by going through. He was shot with a wad and died a few days later. James two daughters now live in Eaton, Ohio. One married Alfred Denny and the other Dr. Minor. One, I think, is named Fanny, the other Caroline. They were very nice women,--very.

EARLY RECOLLECTIONS. The first thing I can recollect--about the first thing, was the death of my brother John. I, and some of the other children were sent over to a neighbor's house to tell them about his death. I recollect I was

very sorry to lose my little brother.

About the next thing I can recollect is that my father kept a horse hitched outside the log cabin, with a hole in the wall, through which a chain was passed, which was fastened to the horse's neck. The chain was fastened inside, and the rattling of the chain was supposed to awaken my father if the Indians came to attack him. Father had his gun there, too. The Indians came around the house one night, when Father was gone to the salt works, down at Big Bone, in the lower part of Kentucky. My mother put the children, myself among them, in the loft. A young girl of the neighborhood was stayng with mother while father was gone. She was so badly scared that she got under the puncheon floor. I was very much afraid, still I did not sit up all night. Mother did. The Indians chopped with their "Tom-a-hawks" at the door awhile. We could hear them talking. They were just on a stealing expedition. They stole some horses that night from old Johnny Lair, who lived over Licking, opposite us. Old Hinkson, an Indian fighter, raised some men and followed them, caught up with them near the mouth of the Licking, not far from where Cincinnati now is. Old Hinkson followed their trail, saw smoke rising from their camp, from the top of the ridge, waited until the Indians slept, crawled up and killed nearly all of them and got all the horses back. There were about twelve in all, all were killed except two, and one of them it was thought would die from the blood that was found. I recollect that the men came over to our house, to see the Indians, the next morning after the Indians were there, said it looked like they had been in our cornfield several days. My old friend George Redding was one of the men who came over.

SCHOOL DAYS. I don't believe I went to school over a year, in my whole life. My first teacher was named Garmony, an Irishman; another teacher's name was Hinkson, a relation of the Indian fighter. I got my arm broken, wrestling, while I was going to school to him. Notwithstanding that, I still kept up the practice of wrestling for several years. I was never thrown two best out of three in my life. I can think of a heap of foolishness away back in my life, but I don't want it down here.

FIGHTS. There were very few. I was a good stout boy nearly a man, when I and a neighbor boy got to fighting at acorn shucking. Our fathers were both present. They separated us. They had divided the piles and the hands, having a corn-shucking match. He began to throw corn from his pile to ours (sic) side, and from that, and each of us got at it, and from that we got to knocking. I don't know who got the best of it. I thought I did. I had a fight in Pike Co. Mo. with a man by the name of McGowan. He had abused his daughter, and she had come to my house because of his bad treatment. He came over to abuse her, and he abused my wife. I was not at home. The first time I saw him afterward, I accused him of abusing my wife. He denied it, gave me the "lie", and I downed

him and pounded him well. He had me arrested with a "Forthwith" and taken before the Justice of the Peace. When I was walking up to the "Squires", McGowan, with other men, was standing before the Justice's office. I said to him, "McGowan, you have a black eye, what's the matter with it?" I have forgotten the reply he made. We went to trial, had jury. He was fined five dollars for abusing a witness, and had the costs to pay. I never had any difficulties about the girls.

LOVE SCRAPES. I will now record my love scrapes. I was a very bashful boy. We had a neighbor, in Kentucky named George Redding, who had a daughter named Rebecca, about my age. We lived within a half a mile of one another and grew up together. My elder brother used to hire her to hug and kiss me, when we were six or seven years old, and it used to plague me awfully. When I was fourteen or fifteen years of age, my father moved into his new house, on the opposite side of his farm, considerably increasing the distance between our house and Mr. Redding's. Rebecca came over to our house about a month after we moved, to pay the family a visit. I found out she was in the house, and I expected my brothers to resort to the old habit of getting her to annoy me. I walked about the yard, considering what I ought to do in the premises, and considering how I could, most successfully go through the expected contest in the evening. I found a resolution and went immediately into the house. After supper, when we were all settled comfortably around the fire, my brothers, just as I had expected, suggested to Rebecca that, as we had not met for some time, she ought to kiss me. She looked at me archly, and seemed to be asking herself whether there was any impropriety in it or not, and before I had time to think about it she was sitting on my lap trying to kiss me. Quick as thought, I now carried out my resolution, previously formed, by running my hand in her bosom. It was her turn to blush, and to attempt to get away from my other encircling arm. She never tried to kiss me again. She afterwards became the wife of my elder brother, William Holliday. The first girl I ever loved was named Jane Edgar, the sister of the Presbyterian minister who lately died in Nashville, Tenn. She married after I did.

(To the question, "How many girls did you ever love?", he answered, "I can not tell you that, My dear!") S.N.H.

POLITICAL OPINIONS. I was first a Republican candidate against the Federalists. I believe I voted for a President before Jackson's time, I have voted the Democratic ticket all my life, and have no reason to regret my course. I was very much opposed to the Know Nothings, and I do not regret that. I believe they had a great deal to do with bringing us into our present troubles and civil war. I never ran for political office, and never desired any. My neighbors have asked me to run for justice of the peace but I do not desire such honors--I have always declined.

USE OF TOBACCO. I began to chew tobacco, when I was about twenty years of age, chewed about forty years, and have not taken a chew since. I have smoked ever since I have quit chewing, except about six months. I quit chewing three or four times, a year or so at a time, one time I quit for three years. I cannot say that the use of tobacco has ever injured me, it has been a great luxury to me.

SWEARING. I never swore an oath in my life to my recollection.

WHISKEY. I used to take my drams, but never was drunk or gaggy groggy. I have not tasted liquor for more than thirty years. I never kept whisky to drink, but would get it for "gatherings," log-rollings, corn-shuckings, house-raising, and the like.

RELIGION. I professed religion when I was about twenty five years of age, and joined the old Presbyterian Church, and continued a member of that church, until I came to Missouri. Three or four years after I came to Missouri, I joined the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and have remained a member of that Church to this time. I have tried to live the life of a true Christian. I have a hope in Christ. That grows brighter as my hair grows whiter for the grave.

I have never been before a Church session but twice, that I recollect. I had a kind of a trial for hitting McGowan. I went before the session myself, of my own motion, and told them what I had done, and, that I was not sorry for it.

They agreed that I was justifiable.

I was up before the session again, at the instance of a neighbor named Gip Crim. He charged that I had told Peter Brammer, on one occasion that if he would come out, I would give him, Brammer, a thrashing. I got Brammer to go to the session to testify and he said that there were not a word of truth in Crim's statement. I was triumphantly acquitted.

MILITARY. When I was about twenty years of age, I was elected Captain of Militia Co., and was Captain for several years, until I left Harrison Co., Ky.

During the time I volunteered, as mounted rifleman or Dragoons in Dick Johnson's Regiment, from Ky. in 1813. We volunteered for three months.

Brother Samuel was out before we were. He went from Indiana, not far from Pendleton. He was an infantry officer, and was out when peace was declared.

My brother William and myself were in the battle of the Thames, in Canada, in Oct., 1813. Both of us were actively engaged in the battle both close together.

Our platoon was the first platoon behind Johnson, in centre Co. James Coleman was our Captain. He was nearly scared to death. He backed--backed over the swamp during the fight. He ordered the men to go back over the swamp, and many of them went. I did not go. I stuck it out, my dear. About one third of the Co. gave back over the swamp, by Coleman's orders, they were the timid portion of the Co. but the bravest talkers. Coleman himself, used to be always blaming Gen. Harrison for the way in which he carried on the war, saying that

if he were General, what he would do, but I never heard him say a word against Harrison after that battle. Harrison was a soldier, I know that. He passed along the line not two minutes before the Indians gave way. Johnson's orders were to crash through, but the Indians were still all around, in the thickets, behind old logs, stumps, and trees, all around us. Johnson gave the orders to light and give them "Indian Play". We jumped off and got behind trees. I shot twice, at Indians both times. I think I killed one I saw him loading. They don't get behind the biggest trees, but about the size of a man's body. Clem Jennings ran to Moravian town, two and one half miles. Lieutenant Logan, a brave man, was wounded and died eight or nine days after the battle.-----Guthrie was shot twice, and lived only eight or nine days. He was the son of the author of Guthrie's arithmetic. When Coleman gave his orders to go back over the swamp, my brother William turned to me and said, "Let us go over the Swamp." I told him "No." He went back, and he thought I was killed until after we got to Moravian town. He was sick. I got my horse the second day after the battle, he ran back five or six miles. Tecumseh was killed in this battle, Johnson did not kill him, I saw Tecumseh's body, the day after the battle. The soldiers had cut off a great deal of skin, to make razor straps. My "Mess" were William Phillips and myself, all of them came to Missouri, except James Trimble, and his widow came. Thomas Hurd did live near Florida, Monroe Co., Mo. He is now (1863) dead. Hiram Phillips, now called "Judge," waited on me when I was married. He resides six or seven miles from Columbia Mo., Boone Co. The widow of James Trimble lives in the eastern part of Randolph Co., Mo. Hiram Phillips was Orderly Sargent (sic) of our Company. The Orderly Sargent has the most troublesome duties in the Company, and he ought to get twice as much wages as are allowed him.

The next summer after I came to Missouri, I was appointed Adjutant in the Militia, and so remained until I was elected Major. Am called "Major" to this very day.

My wife's grandfather, William McCune, was a prisoner with the Indians, three years during the Revolutionary War. He saw sights, my dear. He was ironed frequently, hand cuffed. His wife never heard from him during this time. His wife's father used to quiz her, about setting out, after her husband returned. RESIDENCE. I was born in Bourbon Co., Ky., afterwards cut off, as Harrison Co., as I said before, I lived there until 1817, when I came to the territory of Missouri, and settled on Ramsey's Creek, now in Pike Co., then in St. Charles Co., I lived at Ramsey's Creek one year, and then moved to Spencer's Creek, one mile from Elk Springs, now Pike Co., Mo. and resided there until 1837, then I moved to Monroe Co., Mo., about eight miles west of Paris, where I now live.

MARRIAGES AND FAMILY. I married Nancy McCune, the daughter of John

McCune, March 26th 1816. She died January 9th 1834. Our eldest son, William, was born in Kentucky. Shortly after his birth we moved to Missouri. The Company who came to Missouri together were:

My wife's grandfather, William McCune and family. Benjamin Gray and family. He married a daughter of William McCune, my wife's grandfather. William Holliday, my elder brother and his family. His wife was Rebecca Redding. William Biggs, and his family. He married Betsey, my wife's eldest sister. John McCune, my wife's father and his family. His wife was named Polly Shannon, a daughter, I think, of John Shannon. Myself and my family. I only had half of a four-horse team to move in my father-in-law having the other half, beside his one other wagon. There were six families of us, and I am the only man now living of the whole company. There are but two of the women now living, Betsey Biggs, widow of William Biggs, and Rebecca, the widow of my brother William. She married a second husband named Grant, and is again a widow. She still lives in Grass Creek.

In coming to Missouri, we came by Louisville, then crossed the Ohio river, thence to Smelser's Ferry, about two miles above Alton, Illinois, where we crossed the Mississippi River, thence to St. Charles, thence up to Ramsey's Creek. My wife died in 1834.

I married a second time in 1837 to Elizabeth F. East, widow of Daniel East, in Monroe Co., Mo. My wife's maiden name was Dickerson. By my first marriage, I had nine children, the youngest dying in child-birth, eight, four boys and four girls, arrived to maturity, and are now all living except my eldest daughter Polly, who died a few years since, leaving seven children. She married Daniel Atterberry who died a few years after my daughter. He was killed by a falling of a tree, a limb flew back and killed him. My children were named William Harvey, John James, Thompson, Polly Sloan, Rebecca Jane, Martha Ann, Samuel Newton, and Elizabeth Brewer. All married and are now living except Polly Sloan, whom I have spoken of above. William married Jenetta Harper. They reside in Monroe Co., Mo. She is the niece of my present wife.

John James married Lucretia Foree. They reside in St. Louis (1863) and have eight children living, two dead.

Thompson married Mary Ann Gwyn. She died a few years since. He married a second time, Paulina Arnold, widow, whose maiden name was Phillips.

Thompson had five children of his first marriage, and two of his last, and his present wife has four children by her first marriage. Thompson also resides in Monroe Co., Mo.

Rebecca Jane was married to Samuel H. Dickerson, the nephew of my second wife. They reside in Randolph Co., Mo. and have a large family of children nine living and three dead.

Martha Ann married William Foster. They are now (1863) in Texas; they have one child named Finis Harvey.

Samuel Newton married Maria F. Glasby, they reside in St. Louis and have two children.

Elizabeth Brewer married Adam Gwyn, a brother of Thompson's first wife. They reside in Monroe Co., Mo. and have four children living and two dead. My father was a hard working, industrious, steady man. He was strictly temperate. I never heard of his being groggy in my life. My mother had four brothers, all steady religious men, to-wit; Thomas, Joseph, William, and John Patton. She had five sisters, Sally Morrow, Nancy Steele, Rosanna Mitchell, Polly Wright, and Elizabeth McCune. Elizabeth's first husband was named Maxwell, her second husband William McCune, my first wife's grandfather, by whom she had four children, William, Joseph Polly Lacy, and one other. William McCune is married and lives in Pike Co., Mo., Joseph married a Miss Edwards by whom he had one child who I think is named William. He died and his widow married a second time.

My wife's father, John McCune, was married twice. He had nine children by his first marriage, Betsey, Susan, William, Polly, John S., Harvey T., Nancy, my wife, and Margaret.

By his second marriage he had three children, Harry E., Joseph, and Rebecca. Susan, William, and Polly are now dead. Susan first married Kinkead, who only lived a few years, and afterward she married Thomas Kerr. She left three children living at the time of her death, to-wit; John J., Richard T., and Susan Kerr. John J. Kerr married Margaret Braley, and has several children. He resides in Nebraska City, Nebraska Territory. Richard T. Kerr married a daughter of James Rains. He resides in southwest Missouri. Susan married John C. McBride, by whom she had four children. She died two or three years since, in Monroe Co., Mo. where her husband now resides.

William McCune married Jane Guy. He resides in Pike Co., Mo. near Elk Springs. He died several years since leaving five children, John, Savory, Guy, William, and James. His widow is still living. John, Savory, and Guy are all married and reside in Pike Co., Mo. Polly married a Brewer and died shortly after her marriage leaving an infant child who died soon afterwards.

Betsey married William Biggs. He died many years since leaving a large family, to-wit; John, George, Polly, Milton, Nancy, Emily, Susan, Elizabeth, and Marion, William K., Margaret, and Richard. Emily married Jack Briscoe. She died several years since, leaving two sons, William and James. The others are all living and married.

John S. McCune married Ruth Anna Glasby, by whom he had five children. He resides in St. Louis. Harvey T. McCune married Polly Matson. He had two children living, to-wit; Enoch L. and Susan. He resides in southwest Missouri

on Spring River. Margaret married Thomas Cleaver. They reside in Monroe Co., Mo. have six children, I think.

I neglected to state, when I spoke of the Indians attacking our house during father's absence, that mother, by watching all night, became a little sleepy by daylight. She was on her knees with her axe in her hand, by the door, when she heard a noise over the door, and thinking it was the Indians, she struck her axe above the door, and cut into a roll of cloth that she had lying there, the end of it, being loose, made a noise by being blown by the wind.

The preceding thirteen pages (in the original type-written document) are an exact copy of the autobiography of Joseph Holliday, copy annotated by his son Samuel Newton Holliday of St. Louis, Mo., and are in possession of Mrs. Callie Jones of Independence, Mo. This copy made September 19, 1931 by (Mrs. Leon) Kathryn H. Campbell, 1904 Armstrong Ave., Kansas City, Ks. Signed.

(Mrs. Leon) Kathryn H. Campbell
1904 Armstrong Ave,
Kansas City, Ks.

The Western Citizen, Paris, Kentucky, Wednesday, March 27, 1816--
Marriages: On Thursday last by Rev. Davis Biggs, Capt. Joseph Holiday of Harrison County to Miss Nancy McCune, daughter of John McCune of this county.

A common background

The Holliday name took two paths, each dependent on the color of the namesake's skin. (C-P photo/Hal Smith)

Presidents Bush, Mark Twain and the legacy of slavery -- A lesson for Black History Month

By Terrell Dempsey

For the Courier-Post

This is a tale of slavery, Mark Twain and two American Presidents for Black History Month.

In May 1845, Samuel Clemens, the boy who would become Mark Twain, was 9 years old. His father John Marshall Clemens was down and out. Though he had practiced law in Kentucky and Tennessee, he was not an attorney in Hannibal. The only income the family had was the meager fees he received for hearing small cases in the tiny city court - a non-attorney position he held. It was a parttime job at best.

John Marshall Clemens was pretty much at rock bottom financially in 1845. He and his wife Jane had sold off the last of the six slaves with whom they had begun married life. He had sold everything else he owned to satisfy his creditors. He could not find a buyer for the large tract of rocky land he owned in Tennessee, so he took a job. On May 5, that year, he wrote to his daughter Pamela who was visiting friends in Florida, Mo.:

"I have removed my office of Justice to Messrs McCune & Holliday's counting room where I have taken Mr. Dame's place as clerk - I did not succeed in making such arrangements as would enable me to go into business advantageously on my own acct - and thought it best therefore not to attempt it at present."

Although Joseph Holliday, a Monroe County businessman, died in 1870, slaves still figured prominently in his will. The Holliday name took two different paths, with one finding its way to the White House. (C-P photo/Hal Smith)

-----John Marshall
Clemens may well have known the Holliday family from his time in Florida, Mo. His brother-in-law, John Quarles, still lived in Monroe County. Clemens had served on the Monroe County Commission, (then called the county court), before moving to Hannibal in 1839. While John Marshall Clemens had been a business failure, fortune had smiled on Joseph Holliday. Joseph had evidently gone into business with his in-laws. His wife's maiden name was McCune. With his sons, he built up a commission merchant business in Monroe County. The business maintained an office in Hannibal that was overseen by Joseph's son John James Holliday in the mid-1840s. It was in that office Sam Clemens's father clerked and conducted his court. The Hollidays brought groceries and goods up the Mississippi River by steamboat and then shipped them by wagon to Monroe County.

The Holliday family is important not just for the job they provided to the Clemens family in time of need. John James Holliday's daughter Nancy was born in Hannibal in 1847. She is the great-grandmother of former President George Herbert Walker Bush and great-great-grandmother of President George W. Bush. She lived until 1942 in St. Louis. The elder President Bush turned 18 that year.

Joseph Holliday, like many Northeast Missourians in the days before the Civil War, kept the majority of his money in two assets that were immune from the shaky banking system of the time - land and slaves. In 1850 Holliday owned 10 slaves. By 1860, his human wealth had grown to 16 slaves. Twelve of the slaves in 1860 were identified by the census taker as mulatto or mixed race. It is of course difficult to determine who fathered those slaves, though one must bear in mind the observation of Mary Chesnut, famous southern Civil War

diarist and wife of South Carolina Senator James Chesnut:

"God forgive us, but ours is a monstrous system, a wrong and an iniquity! Like the patriarchs of old, our men live all in one house with their wives and their concubines; and the mulattoes one sees in every family partly resemble the white children. Any lady is ready to tell you who is the father of all the mulatto children in everybody's household but her own. Those, she seems to think, drop from the clouds."

Joseph Holliday lived until 1870, five years after Missouri slaves were finally set free in 1865. Although he amended his will in 1867, slaves still figured prominently in the will. They were listed because they had already been given or sold to his children during his lifetime. In one of history's little twisted ironies, the Bush ancestor John James Holliday had been given a slave named "Walker" whom he had sold. John James Holliday's granddaughter would marry into a Walker family and two American presidents would carry the Walker name into the White House.

The white Holliday family prospered. A town was named in their honor in 1872. Holliday, Missouri was a stop on the Hannibal and Central Missouri Line, later part of the MKT Railroad, better known as the Katy.

Some descendants of the Holliday slaves, many of whom took the name Holliday, still live in Monroe County. They are hard-working people. Patricia Louise Holliday Minter is the living matriarch of one branch. She remembers her grandfather Del Holliday. No one knows exactly when he was born nor much about his family's experiences in slavery. There were two things people of his generation did not talk about: slavery and the white folks to whom they were related. It is clear that the black Hollidays lived a very different life than the white descendants of the Hollidays.

"My grandmother and grandfather could not read or write," Mrs. Minter recalls. She remembers her grandfather as a quiet man who would sit in the corner by himself. He did not seem to enjoy life. "He acted like a slave," she said.

Mrs. Minter's father, Delbert Holliday, was born in 1901, one of 16 children.

"My father had a few years of school. He had what he called common education. He could read and write."

Mrs. Minter, born in 1941, attended her first year of high school in Hannibal. Though she lived in Monroe City, African American students were bused to the all-black Douglass High School 21 miles away in Hannibal. Then the State of Missouri complied with the Supreme Court decision of *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* and she finished at Monroe City High School. Ironically she says she learned more in the segregated school where teachers had higher expectations of the students.

George W. Bush was born in 1946. Despite low grades, he was able to get into Yale as a "legacy student," one of the spots reserved for children of alumni.

After being denied admission to the University of Texas Law School because of his low LSAT scores and undergraduate grades, he was admitted to Harvard Business School. As a private school, Harvard could overlook his academic shortcomings and look instead at his family's social standing and political power. Just as Mrs. Minter's race charted the course of her education, the Bush family's prestige opened doors for the president-to-be.

Mrs. Minter's father did just about any kind of work he could find in Monroe City. He was a butcher, sheared sheep and planted gardens for people. He had 14 children to feed and clothe. "We were poor," Mrs. Minter says, "but we lived middle class. We had plenty to eat and good clean clothes. Momma washed on a washboard in the back yard. We were spotless."

The White House descendants of the former slave masters invested in oil, went to ivy-league schools, and engaged in the rich gentleman's sport of national politics. George W. Bush owned a professional baseball team.

Mrs. Minter has no complaints about her life in Monroe City where she has lived her entire life. She says she never had to go in any back doors and could always sit wherever she wanted in the movie theater. She is proud that her mother or father could give her a note to take to the grocer and he would give her the items on credit knowing that her parents would pay the bill.

Mrs. Minter has worked since she was 11 years old. As a child she babysat for a white family. In exchange they paid for her lunches at school and gave her a little spending money. Today she still works for the same family. She sits with the mother of the children she babysat. Hers is a fine legacy, but very different from the legacy of the Holliday descendant in the White House.

And so a hardworking African American family, two American presidents, America's greatest writer and America's cruelest failure - slavery - are tied together in Missouri history - two branches from a tree named Holliday with two very different legacies. The irony would not have been lost on Mark Twain. He explored the vagaries of race and birth in his book Pudd'nhead Wilson where a mixed-race slave changes her own baby for the master's child. Her child grows up in privilege while the master's son grows up in poverty and ignorance.

We call it Black History Month, but that is not really true. It is actually American History Month. Slavery and the echoing racism touch us all. (Special thanks to Barbara Schmidt of Tarleton State University and Vic Fischer of the Mark Twain Project. Without them this story would have lay hidden in the dust of history. Thanks also to Patricia Minter, Guy and Sandy Callison of Holliday, Missouri and Sam Akers, mayor of Holliday for their assistance and gracious hospitality.)

Spouses

1: Nancy McCUNE

Birth: June 16, 1799 Bourbon County, Kentucky1

Death: January 9, 1834 Pike County, Missouri Age: 34

Father: John McCUNE (1772-1852)

Mother: Mary "Polly" SHANNON (1773-1823)

Marriage: March 26, 1816 Bourbon County, Kentucky

Children: William Harvey (1817->1849)

John James (1819-1881)

Thompson (1821-)

Mary Sloan (1823-1851)

Rebecca Jane (1825->1826)

Martha Ann (1828-)

Samuel Newton (1830-)

Elizabeth Brewer (1831-)

Joseph (1834-1834)

2: Elizabeth EAST

Birth: July 5, 1795 Virginia

Marriage: October 31, 1837 Monroe County, Missouri

Sources

1. 16 June 1799--George Bush genealogy

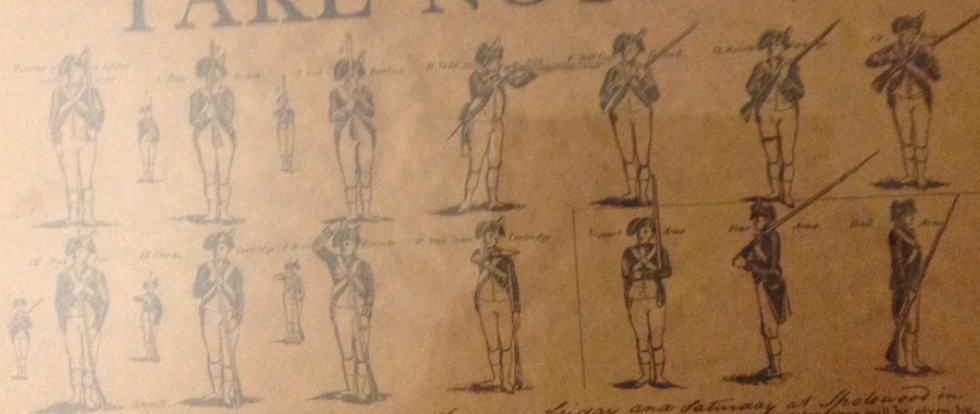
Last Modified: February 15, 2003

Created: February 15, 2003

Here's a recruiting poster from the time of Joseph Holliday. It was obtained by my grandmother in 1912 and she obviously felt it was valuable. i don't know if it is an original.

TO ALL BRAVE, HEALTHY, ABLE BODIED, AND WELL
 DISPOSED YOUNG MEN,
 IN THIS NEIGHBOURHOOD, WHO HAVE ANY INCLINATION TO JOIN THE TROOPS,
 NOW RAISING UNDER
 GENERAL WASHINGTON,
 FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE
 LIBERTIES AND INDEPENDENCE
 OF THE UNITED STATES,
 Against the hostile designs of foreign enemies,

TAKE NOTICE,



THAT *Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday at Shrewsbury in*
the county of Worcester
 with his music and recruiting party of *the 11th Regiment of*
 the 11th Regiment of Infantry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Aaron Ogden, for the purpose of receiving the enrollment of
 such youth of spirit, as may be willing to enter into this honorable service.
 The ENCOURAGEMENT at this time, to enlist, is truly liberal and generous, namely, a bounty of TWELVE dollars, an annual and fully sufficient
 supply of good and handsome clothing, a daily allowance of a large and ample ration of provisions, together with SIXTY dollars a year in cash
 and silver money on account of pay, the whole of which the soldier may lay up for himself and friends, as all articles proper for his subsistence and
 comfort are provided for him, without any expense to him.
 Those who may favour this recruiting party with their attendance at above, will have an opportunity of hearing and seeing in a more particular
 manner, the great advantages which these brave men will have, who shall embrace this opportunity of spending a few happy years in viewing the
 different parts of this beautiful continent, in the honorable and truly respectable character of a soldier, after which, he may, if he pleases, return
 home to his friends, with his pockets full of money and his head covered with laurels.
 GOD SAVE THE UNITED STATES.

PRIVATE PROPERTY
FLORENCE ALEXANDER HOLLIDAY
PURCHASED FROM
SARAH L. OGDEN
OCT. 11. 1992
ROOM. EAST. 31 - WESTOVER -
WORCESTER MASS.
Purchased
By 10/11/92
From 10/11/92
Date 10/11/92

This is on the back of the framed poster

From my Uncle Newt

Dear Steve and Yvonne,

I am typing this letter so you can read it.

We hope that you have a wonderful trip to Scotland and that I can help make it so. Nancy and I have been thinking about such a trip for a long time. My sister Nancy..your Aunt Nancy..and her husband Henry Simonds (Scotch) toured Scotland a few years ago and enjoyed every minute. They did not, however, try to look up any information on the Holliday side of the family which would be your Grandmother Florence Holliday.

With respect to the Holliday family history in Scotland, following is what I have been able to put together.

"John Holliday lived in Scotland and was the Bailie (Alderman) of Culross, Scotland for many years. Culross is a seaport village about 20 miles west of Edinburgh on the north coast of the Firth of Forth just off Highway A985. It would be easy to reach from Edinburgh by car.

John married Isabella McDowell about 1668. They had son they named Adam who was born in Culross August 14, 1670. Adam married Jane Macomson in Scotland on October 2, 1708 in Culross I found out. Since Ireland had been under English rule for almost six hundred years and was open to Englishmen and Scotsmen for settlements, Adam decided to move from Scotland to Northern Ireland so he moved to Rathfriland, County Down which is just south of Belfast. He took his son Samuel with him. Samuel was born in Scotland in 1709. There is more history of the family but it continues in Ireland. I will send it to you when you get back from Scotland because I am hoping that you will find out more about John Holliday when and if you go to Culross.

I cannot find out when and where John Holliday died and is buried and nothing on his wife Isabella. Perhaps, you can learn something in Culross. There is an Information and Visitor's Center in Culross. See if you can visit it and learn something and let us know.



[Return to main text](#)

[Return to Beginning](#)

Appendix 14

TIGER CRUISE '94 A DREAM CRUISE ON AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER

BY STEPHEN COESTER



Dateline Pearl Harbor, the date is not December 7, 1941, but rather August 6, 1994 . It is not the "Day of Infamy that will live Forever", but rather a beautiful summer day in Honolulu. I have just arrived in Hawaii to participate in a once in a lifetime opportunity, seven days on the USS Carl Vinson CVN 70. She is the newest, most powerful nuclear powered aircraft carrier in the Navy, and is on the return trip to San Diego after completion of a six month long operational cruise. During the cruise, known as WESTPAC 94, the Carl Vinson and her Task Group consisting of a nuclear powered Cruiser, a Guided Missile Frigate, a Fast Supply Ship, and an Attack Nuclear Submarine supported the peace keeping mission in the Arabian Gulf. Daily air operations were flown over Iraq maintaining the no fly zone mandated by the United Nations.

At the Honolulu airport, I was met by my son and sponsor, Lt. Dean Coester, who is a pilot aboard the ship, along with his wife, Kathy, and my granddaughter, Kristen, age one and a half years. Kathy met the ship when it arrived a week earlier in Honolulu. Dean had not seen his child for one-third of her young life, nor his wife for the long six month separation. Multiply their experience by several thousand and one can appreciate the personal sacrifice these families have made. We had one day together before the ship departed for the mainland. There was no doubt that we'd all go visit the Arizona Memorial in remembrance of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor over 50 years ago. The USS Arizona was one of the Battleship fleet sunk at her dock in the sneak attack on December 7, 1941. Over 1200 of her crew remain entombed in the rusting hulk beneath the clear waters. To this day, fuel oil from the Arizona's bunkers bubbles to the surface, a reminder that this was once a living ship. It was a somber trip by launch out to the viewing stand over the Arizona after viewing historical films of the events leading to the U.S. entry into World War II, and the attack on Pearl Harbor.

After bidding farewell to Kathy and Kristen, Dean and I, along with Dean's other guest, J.D. Tierny, who is Dean's brother-in-law, went aboard the aircraft carrier to register for Tiger Cruise '94. This is a program which invites male guests, known as Tigers, to ride from Honolulu to the West Coast on their sponsors' ships. Ages of the guests ranged from eight to over seventy. The program is no cost to the government with transportation and food costs aboard ship being born by the guests. We quickly learned that much of Navy life is spent standing in line, as we joined one thousand other Tigers checking in for the cruise. Each Tiger would live in his sponsor's enlisted or officer quarters. My son and his three other officers who roomed together in a two double bunk stateroom moved out to the enlisted bunking area so we could borrow their bunks. It wasn't bad if you like gray paint, lots of pipes running through your room, and the continuous noise of blowers, compressors, and aircraft landing or taking off just over your head. The living conditions are spartan, the food is plentiful if not gourmet, and a code of living has evolved that prevents minor problems from being blown out of proportion, since there just isn't anywhere to escape. During our short week aboard, everyone from the lowest enlisted apprentice to the Admiral was unfailingly polite,

cheerful and helpful to each Tiger and to each other. This was after they had been aboard for six months with only limited port liberty time. I was most impressed by the comradeship of the whole crew. There has been a great change since I was in the Navy 30 years ago. The separation between the officers and crew is much less now, and everyone works as an integrated team of professionals.

It is hard to picture how big a modern aircraft carrier is. We Tigers learned a few necessary routes; where to eat, sleep, and join our tours. Most of the ship remained a maze to us. The USS Carl Vinson is over one thousand feet long and carries a crew of 5000. It is a floating city with all the requirements and problems of a small town, plus having to be prepared to fight a war. The aircraft are catapulted to 150 mph in just three seconds to gain flying speed. Upon landing the pilot must hit one of four arresting cables mounted just forty feet apart. The ship is powered by two reactors each only six foot by ten foot and capable of providing electricity for 50,000 people.

Since my son is a pilot of the F/A18 Hornet attack fighter, I was most interested in the flight operations. During the week, Dean flew a bombing demonstration and one other hop, so I had the opportunity to watch him brief for his hop, prepare his aircraft, catapult off the ship, and land on the "postage stamp" size landing area. What a thrill for any parent! The catwalks along the ship's Island are the only accessible location for viewing the flight operations so space filled up at least two hours before flying began. These catwalks are known as "Vultures Row" for obvious reasons. One of Dean's flights was a bombing demonstration, and I can tell you that you don't want to be anywhere near a F/A18's target. These fighter jocks dropped about 20 "dumb" bombs on a target being dragged by the ship, and not one missed by more than 20 feet. As we say, close enough for government work. And this was while performing drastic evasive maneuvers and low level flight. The Desert Storms films we all saw of precision bombing are just another day's work for these guys.

The ship is able to launch a plane every twenty seconds or land one every forty-five seconds. The Air Boss is the dictator of the Island who controls every action with an iron fist, continuously yells over the speaker system and choreographs a cross between a ballet and a Chinese fire drill to keep the flight operations on schedule. Recognize that most of these professionals who are responsible for all of the

complex tasks involved in preparing the aircraft, fueling, loading bombs and ordnance, directing aircraft on the crowded flight deck, operating catapults and arresting gear, and operating radar and communications gear are under twenty years old. In civilian life they would probably be flipping burgers somewhere. The military training program is unparalleled. The flight deck is known as one of the most dangerous places on earth, with jet intakes and exhausts, spinning propellers and helicopter blades, tie downs and heavy equipment crowded together. You have to see it to appreciate the degree of expertise demonstrated by all of these young men.

The pilots are the prima donnas aboard ship. After all, the total purpose of the whole Task Group is to launch the aircraft on their missions. The pilots are a rare breed. The "Right Stuff" is not just a catch phrase. It takes a strange combination of intelligence, confidence, teamwork, ego, and an enthusiastic joy of life to fly today's modern Naval aircraft off a tiny airfield, at night and in nasty weather; to fly in harms way, and to return to a pitching deck with a damaged plane, low on fuel. And these men would not trade places with anyone for the opportunity to risk their lives every day. The cruise was well organized with the objective of exhausting the Tigers and filling us with an encyclopedic knowledge of shipboard life. We were offered daily tours to learn all about the ship's departments and the seven types of aircraft embarked aboard the Carl Vinson. Every squadron and department knew that they were the most important, best trained, most efficient, and had the highest morale on board ship. It was extremely informative and motivational to listen to the briefers. The Marine Corps contingent demonstrated assault tactics, performed a marvelous close order drill routine, and one evening expended 30,000 rounds of ammunition in a spectacular live fire demonstration. These guys are tough; exactly what we need to spearhead a military assault. A Carrier Air group flight demonstration of all the aircraft types was performed with a highlight demonstration of close formation flying by two former Blue Angels. Finally the day before reaching San Diego, the whole Air group departed so I was able to watch as over seventy aircraft were catapulted off the ship. It is a tribute to the Air group, the ship, and the Navy that every last aircraft was able to fly off after six months of near war operations over the desert.

All too soon we arrived back at the mainland. A final massive, hectic operation as the air group disembarked with all of their equipment, including bombs, fuel tanks, ordnance, maintenance and office equipment. The Tigers disembarked tired, happy, and thoroughly impressed with the state of readiness and morale of our Navy.

[Return to main test](#)

[Return to Beginning](#)

Appendix 15

September 11, 2001

The NYC Terrorist Attack



Yvonne and I arrived home safely at 1230 am Thursday Sept. 13. We want to thank all of you that called our phone message service and sent emails asking about us. Our little inconvenience is totally insignificant. The events which transpired on September 11 are of such tragic proportions that every man, woman and child in America has already been affected. I fear that as the list of direct victims is known we will all know someone that has been killed or injured, and all of our lives will be altered. Be brave, be strong, be patriotic in this time of trial for the United States of America. We have been notified that so far that twelve USNA Alumni including the pilot of one of the American Airlines flights have been killed in the airplanes.

Dean is also safe. He was off duty visiting his family in California and is presently stuck out there awaiting word from United. He knows some of the perished United employees and has often piloted those

very flights. What a challenge to get the air traffic system working again.

We were on United Flight 275 which left Orlando at 0730 bound for San Francisco and then Seattle for our RVing vacation. Yvonne had just commented on what a smooth flight we were having after enjoying a good breakfast. I was watching "A Knight's Tale" to pass some of the long flight. We were somewhere over Texas. At about 0930 Eastern the pilot came on the intercom; "Folks, I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but airplanes have hit both towers of the World Trade Center." Never have I heard such a subdued voice. As with those of you who viewed the actual events, our minds refused to process this information. A few minutes later the pilot told us the skies were being cleared and that we would be diverted to Denver. Then it was Colorado Springs, landing in forty-five minutes. Immediately after that we were told that we were directed to get out of the sky immediately and would be landing at Amarillo, TX in fifteen minutes. Of the three thousand planes in the air over the U.S. at the time of the terror, we were among the last ten or twelve planes in the air in all the United States. As we were nearing the ground at maybe five hundred feet the right wing suddenly dropped steeply and I had a quick thought that we may be crashing, but the pilot was merely correcting his final course at an airport I'm sure he had never seen before and we landed perfectly. Amarillo is a small airport and the only other planes we saw were three American Airlines aircraft. I have no idea if they belonged there or had been diverted since Amarillo is served by American, but not United. Almost immediately the rolling stairs were brought out and we debarked without taking our hand luggage.

We then saw our first TV pictures of the unbelievable carnage. No one knew what to do with us or when we would be leaving. People reacted per their personalities. I did not see anyone acting with impatience or anger over being diverted. I suggested we sit back, see what would happen and expected to get a hotel in Amarillo. Yvonne went into let's get the heck out of here mode. We were actually extremely lucky to have landed in Amarillo instead of one of the major airlines where thousands of passengers were stranded. We checked

with Budget Rent a Car and they wanted \$1500 for a car to Florida. That seemed extreme so we refused. Then Yvonne found a woman, Lucille, who was renting an Advantage car to Houston for just over \$200 and whose boyfriend, Lamar, was going to drive the 1000 miles from Daytona Beach to pick her up. We found one other 32 year old man, Dave, who wanted to go back to Florida. The four of us finally retrieved all of our luggage and headed off toward Houston some six hundred miles away at 1230 Tuesday afternoon.

Our traveling companions were wonderful and not an angry word was spoken during the whole ten hour drive across the emptiness of West Texas to Dallas and then to Houston. These were really fine people. We stopped every couple of hours for pit stops and junk food. We contacted Lamar by cell phone when we arrived in Houston and he was only in Baton Rouge, LA which is still about five hours east of Houston. We got two Holiday Inn Express rooms, one for Lucille and Yvonne, and one for Dave and me. We got a little rest while Lamar continued driving toward us. At 0400 Wednesday I roused everyone and we arranged to meet a totally exhausted Lamar. It was so eerie driving into a totally empty George Bush International Airport to return the Advantage Rental Car. We left Houston at 0600 Eastern in Lamar's Suburban and finally arrived at the Florida border after passing Baton Rouge LA, New Orleans, LA, Mobile, AL at about 4 pm some ten hours later. Lucille and Lamar had people in Pensacola and decided that Lamar had to have some rest so they dropped us at Pensacola Municipal Airport where we were able to obtain an Avis car to Orlando. This decision was made just after I had opened a can of sardines so I hope I wasn't the cause of their decision to dump us! The only increased security we saw was at Pensacola Airport where they sniffed the car and looked underneath for explosives. Finally at about 1130 pm on Wednesday after about 28 hours of driving, we turned in the Avis car at Orlando Airport which was also totally empty, picked up our car from long term parking and arrived home at 1230 am This morning. Again, I can't say enough good things about Lucille, Dave, and Lamar. Even Yvonne remained positive the whole twenty-nine hours on the road.

We gave Lamar a little money for gas. Since they are addresses on this email, if either Lucille or Dave feels we owe more, please just say what our share is and it will be in the mail immediately.

We were never in danger, but in retrospect we all feel very lucky. We were on about the only remaining early morning transcontinental flight from the East Coast, on one of the two affected airlines, loaded with fuel, in a state with associations with the terrorists. Why our flight wasn't targeted we'll never know.

God Bless America.

[Return to main page](#)

[Return to Beginning](#)

Appendix 16 Drag's Handbook



The DRAG'S HANDBOOK

The Drag's Handbook is dedicated to all the young ladies that have been "Drags" in the past, or will be in the future. We, the members of the *Log* staff, hope that you will find this Handbook useful and most of all, interesting and informative.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter From The Hostess	3
Drag To Drag	4
Arrival To Noon Meal	7
The Reception Room	8
Saturday Afternoon	11
Saturday Night	15
Map Of Annapolis	16 & 17
Sunday Morning	18
Sunday Afternoon	20
Salty Slang	22
Four Classes Of Mids	25
June Week	27
Drag House Listing	31
Check Off List	32
Map Of The Naval Academy	Back Cover



CONTRIBUTORS

The Drag's Handbook is the result of combined efforts of the *Log* Features, Photographic and Layout Staffs. A lot of assistance was received from Drags who wanted to pass along bits of useful "gouge."





Dear "Drags,"



WELCOME aboard! If this is your first visit to the Naval Academy as a Midshipman's drag, you have a delightful time to anticipate—and if you've been here before, you already know what fun it is!

A few (?) years ago, I was a drag, and I well remember the excitement of plans and preparations for an Annapolis weekend. I came here during the era of the extreme high heels, (a real hazard to transportation) but the main thing then was to have the "tiny foot" look—you are fortunate indeed as the comfortable walking shoe is very much in style and just right for Crabtown brick sidewalks.

All the evening events are dress-up occasions so bring your prettiest formal (either long or short). Remember to bring a hat and white gloves for Chapel—other clothing hints will be found in the "Drag to drag" letter.

If I can help in any way—either by mail, telephone, or in person—I'd be most happy to do so. On weekdays I will be in the Hostess Office which is located in Bancroft Hall, just opposite the Sample Room; and on weekends, a hostess is on duty in Steerage.

I hope your visit with us will be a happy one.

Sincerely,

MRS. M. MARSHALL
Office of the Hostess

Drag to Drag . . .

So, you've been invited to Annapolis, you're all excited, yet a little hesitant about what to do. No matter what people tell you about it before you go, there are a thousand and one crises which will arise before that unforgettable weekend is



through—so BE PREPARED—a little extra caution never hurt anyone. Bring that extra blouse you're sure you won't need but just adore. Don't overdo it. It's always nice when your suitcase will close, it makes a much more pleasant weekend! I mean, what could be nicer than walking down the street with your Mid while he's carrying suitcase to the draghouse and your suitcase flies open and that lovely blouse falls in the mud! Did I say mud? That's another little added benefit at Annapolis—Instant Rain—so be ready for it at any moment. It can be clear and bright all week and Saturday morning, but because you're going to Annapolis and want your hair to look especially nice, it will rain from the moment you arrive until just before you leave. Then for some unknown reason, the weather becomes beautiful again.

A constant problem to Drags are the historic cobblestone sidewalks. Maybe you like that colonial atmosphere, but your feet won't, so, as much as you want to wear that lovely new pair of "spikes", think first about your feet and Mid. No one wants to hear you complaining about your feet, especially him.

Now as for the weekend itself—try to have a brief outline of plans. This isn't always easy because for some reason, Mids get a special pleasure out of keeping plans a secret. Therefore, be ready to go sailing (with either bermudas or slacks), to go to the hop (formal), to Chapel, to a play, to the movies, or just sit around the drag house. To be more

specific about clothes:

1. A skirt and sweater or blouse, dress or suit to arrive in, wear heels if you want, but be sure to bring an extra pair of comfortable shoes. You will probably remain in this outfit all day. Don't plan to change clothes every hour, there simply isn't time.

2. The hop is one of the main attractions of the weekend. They are all formal, and it is advisable to wear gloves. Be sure to have a warm coat because you can get pretty cold walking to and from the hop.

3. You will need an outfit for church. If you believe in travelling light, wear the same outfit as worn on Saturday. No one cares how many times you repeat the same outfit in one weekend, just wear hat and gloves.

4. Don't forget to include those little extras—an additional blouse or sweater, bermudas or slacks to go sailing, and comfortable shoes.

Check with your Mid about a place to stay. If he can't get you a place, do it yourself by talking to other Drags. When you first arrive at Annapolis, it is best to go right to the drag house if possible. Drag house rates are approximately five dollars a night, give or take a dollar or so depending on the place. There are usually a million other girls staying there (or so it will seem to you). This may appear to be a hindrance to you, but can really be a help, when you need to have a question answered.

There are an infinite number of rules for Midshipmen. The most im-

portant ones that apply to dragging are:

No public display of affection, this includes holding hands. The Mids must go to formations. They are at 6:30 on Saturdays and 12:30 on Sundays. Youngsters have to be at hops by 9:30, Segundos at 9:45, and Firsties at 10:00. They can't be late so don't you be either. After the hop, 3/c must be in forty minutes after it's over, 2/c have fifty minutes, and 1/c have sixty minutes. If you don't go to the hop, 3/c must be back by 11:00, 2/c by 11:30 and 1/c by 12:00. Don't make your Mid late! He doesn't like being "fried." At 6:30 on Sunday, they all have

to return to Mother Bancroft, therefore there's not much point in your staying over. These are just a few of the more important rules. If you aren't sure about something, write the hostess office.

Weekends at Annapolis are loads of fun and I'm sure you will enjoy yours. Old "Draggs" consider themselves authorities on the place. If I have left any of your questions unanswered, ask them, they'll be more than glad to help you. "Welcome aboard, Drag," to one of the most wonderful, exciting, confusing experiences in your life! ⚓

CANDY DANIEL

Mary Washington College '64

CLASS CRESTS
CRESTED JEWELRY
MINIATURE RINGS ON DISPLAY

Special Selection of Gifts for Midshipmen

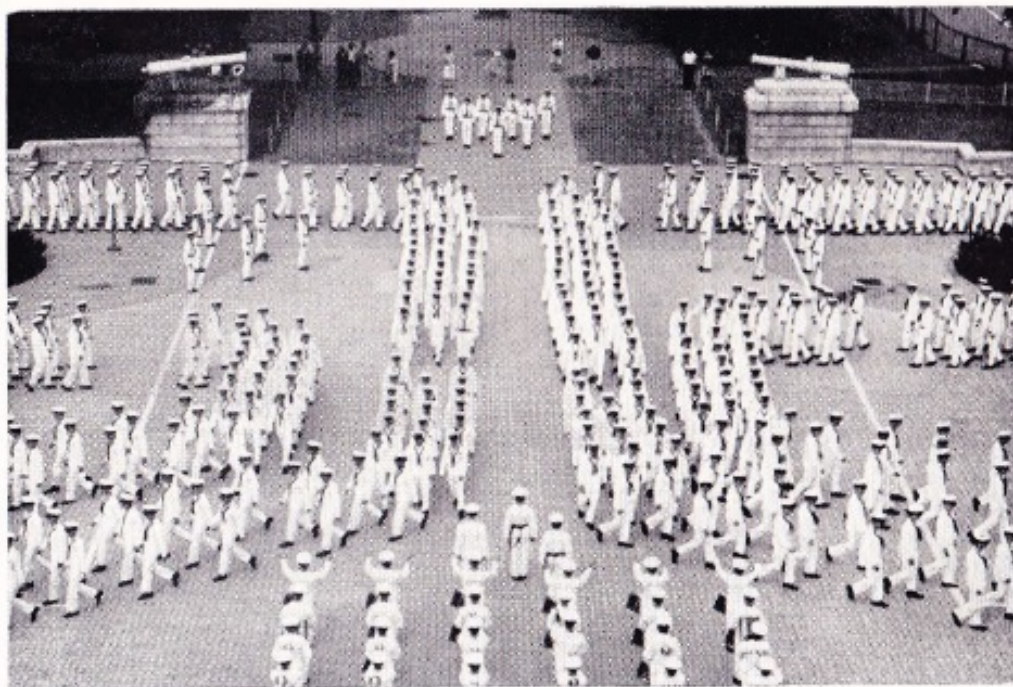


TILGHMAN COMPANY

Registered Jeweler & Certified Gemologist
American Gem Society

44 STATE CIRCLE

ANNAPOLIS



Arrival at Saturday Noon Meal

As most Drags will soon find out, the most successful weekends are those which have been somewhat planned in advance. Such things as where her Mid will meet her, how exactly to get to the Drag house, and in general, naviguessing around Crabtown are essential knowledge for the new Drag.

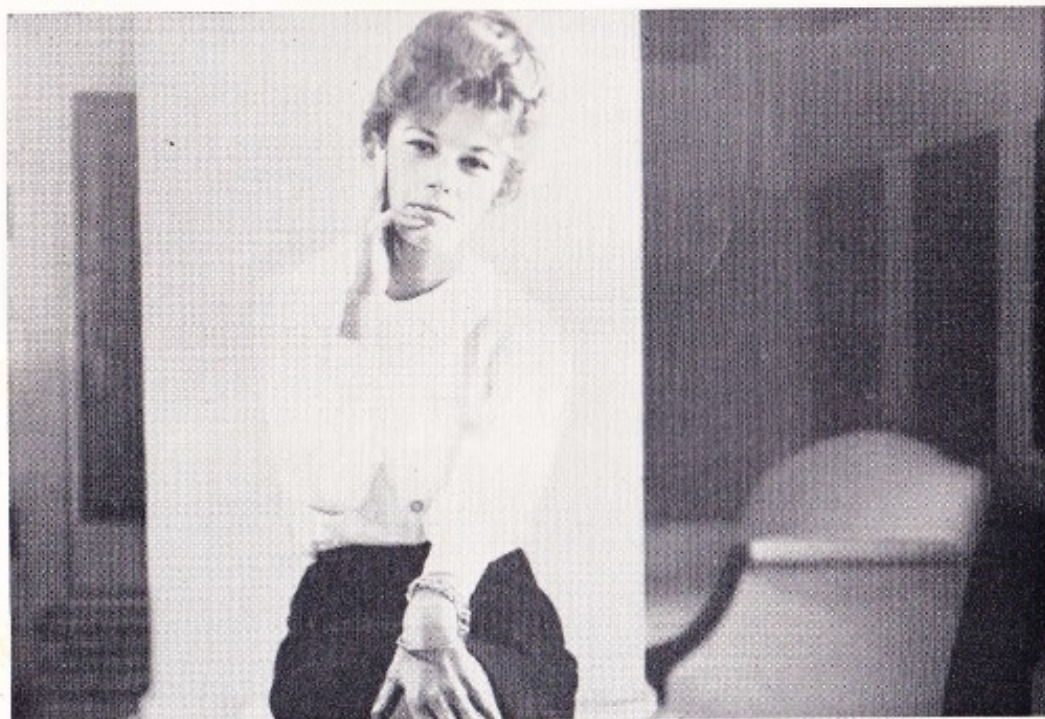
Assuming our Drag arrives about 10:30-11:00 Saturday morning, let's plot out her course until she meets her Mid later that day. The first thing she must do is get to the Drag house, probably change into some more comfortable shoes for cobble-hopping, and generally get squared away for the weekend. We shall assume that her Mid has given her directions.

After getting settled, our new Drag

will naturally like to get a quick look around the Yard before noon meal formation. This formation is normally at 12:10 on Saturdays, and is something that the Drag shouldn't miss. Also, weather permitting, the Navy Chief's Band will give concerts in front of the chapel from 11:00 until formation.

Immediately after formation, the Drag should be waiting at the designated spot for her Mid—when the exodus of Midshipmen begins, she will not be able to pick him out of the sea of blue that will converge on Tecumseh Court; he can probably spot you long before you will see him.

Having met her Mid, the Drag will find herself whisked off on her first weekend at the Naval Academy. ⚓



The Reception Room

A CAUSE for great alarm is the Reception Room, for no reason that I can see, except that one is at a loss as to where to go and what to do. Here are some easy notes to remember. If you should forget, ask

A quiet Sunday afternoon in the yard.



any Mid, he'll be glad to help you.

Once you've found Bancroft Hall (which is easy, it is the biggest building there and has a statue of an Indian, better known as Tecumseh, directly in front of it), go up the steps and through any one of the three doors. On the left is a table with three Mids sitting behind it. There are phones and various papers on the table so you know you're at the right place. Tell one of these Mids that you want to have a message sent to Mid'n ——— in room ——— and then say what the message is i.e. "his Drag's waiting in the reception room." If you can't remember his room number, don't

panic, they can look it up for you. After you have done this, look to your left. On the right hand side of the hall is a sign marked "Reception Room". Go there and wait. If you want to comb your hair, and what girl doesn't, once in the Reception Room, you will see on the right a room marked "Powder Room". Don't take too long because if your Mid comes and sees that you are not waiting for him, this could cause additional confusion. If you are ahead of him, go back out to the Reception Room, pick a nice comfortable chair and sit down to wait. When your Mid comes, the ordeal of the Reception Room is over. ⚓

CHARTER HOUSE

MOTOR LODGE & RESTAURANT

Host To First Inter-American Naval Academy Conference



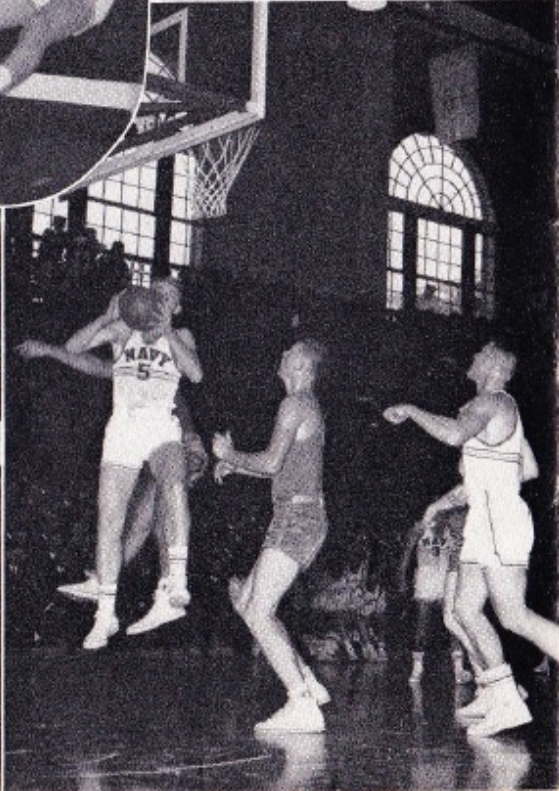
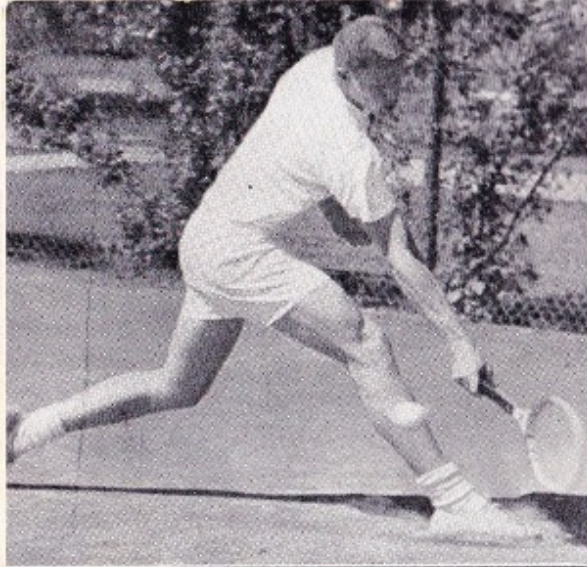
**Oddly enough,
Louis XIV
likes
modern
furniture . . .**

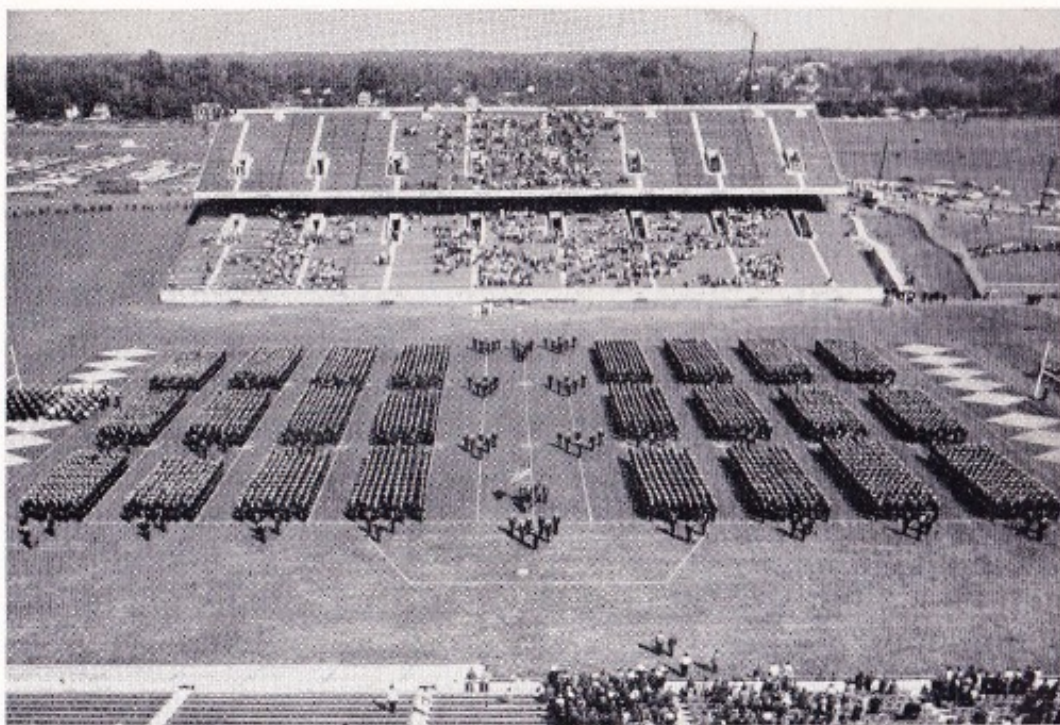
**AND SO WILL YOU AT
CHARTER HOUSE**

This side of bay bridge on Route 50-301 2 miles from Annapolis

**FULLY AIR-CONDITIONED
SWIMMING POOL
PATIO DINING
TELEVISION
UNLIMITED PARKING FACILITIES
SIRLOIN STEAK**
*you can hear it sizzle all the way
from the kitchen to your table.*

We think that our Pool-side Patio
offers the most pleasant summer
dining in town.





The new Navy Marine Corps stadium is the scene of home games, football and soccer in the Fall and lacrosse in the Spring.

Saturday Afternoon

SATURDAY afternoon at the Naval Academy is chock-filled with possibilities for recreation, entertainment, and relaxation. Sports events on Saturdays are very diversified, and on a given weekend you and your midshipman can witness almost any seasonal sport. If you are totally new in Annapolis, he can show you around the Academy and our town. Recreational sailing, tennis and

golf, are listed high among the favorite activities of a midshipman and his "drag."

If your midshipman was fortunate enough to get sailing authorization for the afternoon, he may take you sailing on one of the Academy's 30 knockabouts. You will spend your afternoon in the sun with at least one other couple since two midshipmen are necessary to man these boats.



Your Mid can find out the name of the other drag, and you might want to arrange with her a picnic lunch for consumption on the sail. The more active couples can enjoy tennis on the tennis courts adjacent to Bancroft Hall or a game of golf at the beautiful Naval Academy golf course. You'll have to delay lunch until later in the afternoon in order to get one of the tennis courts before 1:00. Unless you are the guest of a first classman, your mid must take the bus to the golf course while you drive over to meet him. You must have your own racquets to play tennis, but the golf course will lend any equipment you need.

If you are unfamiliar with Naval

M. Bruce Beavers, Innkeeper

Tel.: Colonial 3-2641



17 *Treadway* 78
Maryland Inn

on Church Circle, Annapolis
Catering to the Midshipmen

Conveniently located in the center of historic Annapolis—5 minutes from the Naval Academy—combines charm and colonial heritage with modern facilities. Serving excellent food prepared from Treadway's famous recipes.

	Taproom	
Fifty Air-Conditioned		3 Air-Conditioned
Rooms With Baths		Dining Rooms
Party Accommodations		Box Lunches on Request
	Elevator	

Academy tradition, a tour with your midshipmen will fill you in. Undoubtedly the tour will be highlighted by visits to the museum, the field house, Memorial Hall, and the Academy Chapel. Be sure to ask your Mid to take you to these places, for he may take them somewhat for granted. You and your host will dine in the colonial atmosphere of Annapolis; and if the weather isn't good Saturday afternoon, he will probably take you out to one of the three theatres near the Academy. For pure relaxation you can sit awhile in the television lounge in Smoke Hall, visit the midshipman soda fountain known as the steerage, or walk across the Severn bridge to the shaded riverside picnic grounds. ⚓

Scott
Book Center

**LARGEST SELECTION
OF BOOKS IN TOWN**

Greeting Cards
Rental Library
Gifts

BOOKS
MAKE LASTING GIFTS
211 MAIN ST. CO. 8-2311



U
S

N
A

COSTUME HOPS—

HELD A COUPLE
OF TIMES EACH
YEAR

Saturday Night

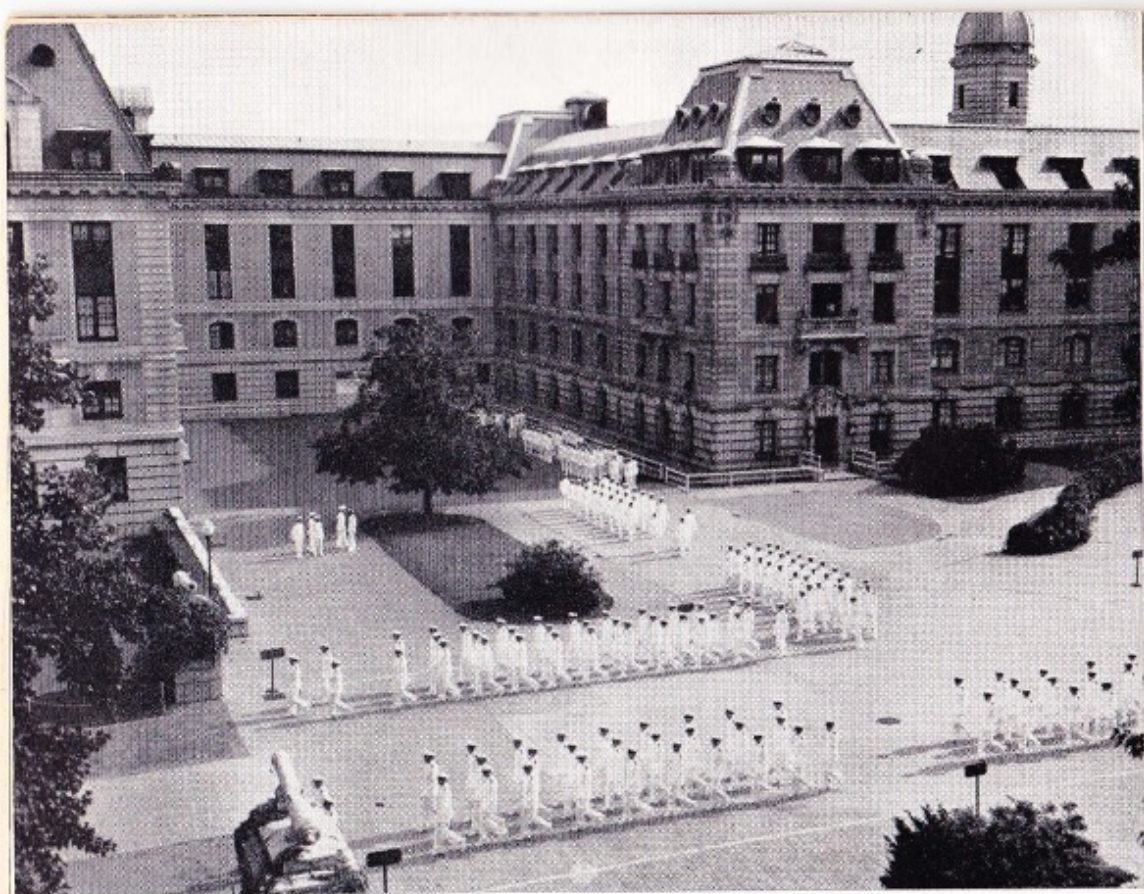
FOR most of the year, Saturday night is the focal point of the weekend. Fortunately, for all hands, the entertainment fare is more varied on Saturday night than on any other part of the weekend.

The magic word is "hop", meaning dance. There is one each and every Saturday night, without exception. Khrushchev may rant, Castro rave, Israel declare war but the USNA will have it's hop. There are two types of hops, formal and costume. The midshipmen wears full dress, white gloves, to the formal hops; and full dress, wear rain gear, to the costume hops. The drag should wear a formal to the formal hops. This can be any type, short or long, from the latest Paresian style to last year's high school strapless. Just remember that you may well have to wade through a foot or two of snow before you arrive at Dahlgren Hall. For the costume hop, be fore-warned! Anything goes, it is nice if you can

arrange to have your costume fit the motif of the particular hop. But the wilder the costume, the better.

On many Saturday nights, especially during the winter there are better entertainments. These are many and varied. For the cultured (?) you can listen to some of the better concert musicians. The Musical Clubs Show, written, produced and acted by Midshipmen is well worth attending. The Masqueraders perform a Broadway show on two weekends during the Dark Ages, and the Navy Relief Show by the Severn River Naval Command actors provides sophisticated acting and action. You can make any of these and also the hop, in which case, wear a dress that will fit the hop. If not attending the hop, wear what you would to a semi-formal. For the bored and blasé there are movies in town, and in the yard. Many, however, choose to merely spend a quiet evening "at home" in the drag house. ⚓





Sunday Morning

ON Sunday morning the Brigade attends religious services of their choice. At eight o'clock in the academy chapel is the Catholic Mass and at ten thirty the Protestant service. The service begins after the midshipmen have marched into the chapel as the band appropriately plays "Onward Christian Soldiers" and other favorite hymns. The midshipmen sit together in the front of the chapel and the girls sit either in the balcony or behind the section of midshipmen. You will look around

the chapel and be aware of the old hanging ship model, the deeply colored stained glass windows, and the formal spirit of the service, all of which make the chapel one of ancient Navy tradition and beauty. Inscribed in the stained glass window above the altar are the words "Eternal Father Strong To Save", expressing the profound faith of the midshipmen as they sing the words of the Navy hymn,

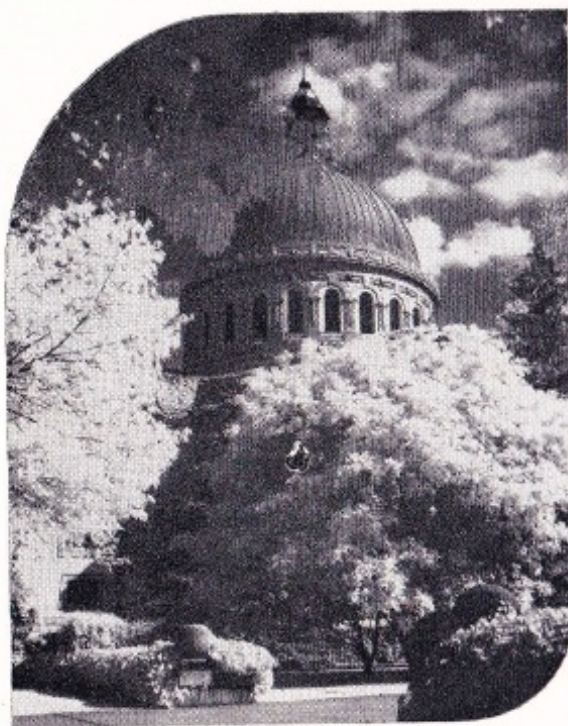
"O hear us when we cry to thee.
For those in peril on the sea."

The services, whether Protestant or Catholic, are designed to welcome all denominations and services. The formal atmosphere of the chapel lends itself to the ceremonial tradition of the academy, while the simple and impressive worship service instills in all present the spirit of humbleness and simplicity. From time to time various well known guest speakers visit the chapel and present a rare opportunity for the congregation to hear them.

Your midshipman may attend the

church of his choice in town and, if so, you will be able to meet him there fifteen minutes before the service begins. There are churches of all denominations in Annapolis and the midshipmen are allowed to attend any of them if they desire.

After the worship services you and your midshipman may want to meet in the yard and walk around for half an hour before noon meal formation. If you plan to eat in town, your mid will probably suggest that you reserve a table in one of the restaurants. ⚓





Sunday Afternoon

SUNDAY afternoons are very quiet around Annapolis. This is an ideal time to stroll through the yard or just relax in the drag house.

If your midshipman is the more energetic type, you may attend an informal hop held in Smoke Hall from 3:30 until 5:30. These hops



feature music piped in from the Brigade radio station, WRNV. A direct line to the studio is available for musical requests. While attending the hop, you will probably make use of the Steerage, Navy's version of the corner malt shop. Here, amid a quiet atmosphere, you can relax and enjoy light refreshments while reviewing the events of the weekend.

On certain Sundays, various events are scheduled to provide entertainment for the midshipmen and their guests. During the second term of each year, WRNV sponsors several concerts featuring currently popular musical artists. In the past, such favorites as Louis Armstrong, the Kingston Trio, Julie London, Joni James, the Brothers Four, Duke Ellington, the Four Lads, and Maynard Ferguson have performed for the Brigade. These concerts usually start at 2:00 and last until 4:00.

A recent innovation in Sunday afternoon entertainment are the NA-10 concerts. These concerts start around 2:30 and feature two hours of excellent music presented by the Brigade's most talented musicians.

If none of these events are scheduled, you may want to attend a movie. The three theaters in Annapolis usually have very good recent releases. In addition, a movie is shown every Sunday afternoon in Mahan Hall. These movies, also recent releases, start about 3:30.

For the avid sailors, knockabouts are again available for an afternoon of sailing on the bay.

Around four o'clock, the drags begin to converge on the Annapolis bus station to start their trip home. Be sure and check the bus schedule for a convenient departure. Liberty is up for all midshipmen at 6:30. At this time, they must be present for evening meal formation. If you are in a private car, you might want to stay and view this last formation. If not, it is best to allow sufficient time for your midshipman to escort you to the bus station and return in time for evening meal.

As you leave Annapolis, we hope that you will look back on your weekend as an enjoyable experience, one that you will repeat often in the future. ⚓

FOR DINNER

OR

A QUICK SNACK

OF THE FINEST

SANDWICHES IN TOWN

COME TO

MANDRIS RESTAURANT

IN MARKET SPACE

ON THE CORNER OF

RANDALL AND DOCK STS.

Salty Slang

ANCHOR MAN—There, but for the grace of God, walks a civilian.

ARMY BRAT — Army Equivalent to the "Navy Junior."

BATT—Battalion, one-sixth of the Brigade.

BILGE—To be assigned to civilian duty; to flunk.

BLACK "N"—Mythical award for a Class "A" offense.

BLIND DRAG — Accepted sight unseen.

BOW-WOW — B.O.O.W., the Midshipman Battalion Officer of the Watch.

BRACE UP — To take a military strain, shoulders back, chest out, chin in.

BRICK—A drag with the appearance and/or personality of same.

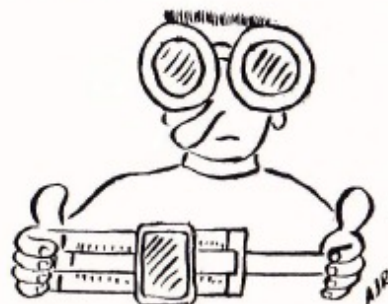
BUCKET—Bonehead, bilger, one who doesn't get this academic stuff.

BULKHEAD—Wall.

BULL—Anything taught by Dept. of English, History and Government. 600 word filler in a 500 word theme.



Chow Hound



Slash

BUSH—Weekly list of near casualties in academics; between 2.5 and 2.8.

CHIT—Written statement, note, letter, requisition, etc.

CHOP—Double time.

CHOW HOUND—Someone who eats up his subsistence allowance and yours too.

C.I.S.—"Dear John, I'd really love to come, but . . ."

CLUTCH—To freeze up in a crisis.

CRAB — Female resident of Crabtown.

CRABTOWN — Annapolis, an antiquated fishing village on the banks of the Naval Academy.

DAGO—Any foreign language.

DEMERIT—Modern version of cat-o'-nine-tails.

DOPE—Any information on any subject whatsoever.

DRAG — To escort or be escorted, USNA style. One who is escorting or escorted.

EXTRA DUTY — Disciplinary drill, punishment for accumulating demerits.

FLYING SQUADRON—The men who sprint to beat the deadline and the OD at the Rotunda after a Hop.

FRAP—A conduct report for an infraction of regulations.

FRIED—Placed on a conduct report; given a Frap.

FRUIT—Anything that insults the intelligence; easy, a snap.

GEDUNK—Any chow purchased in the Steerage.

GOUGE — A collection of answers that even the pros understand.

GREASE — Influence; aptitude for the Service.

GREASY — His impression on his seniors is foremost on his mind.

GUARD — To have the watch.

GYRENE—One of the *Semper Fidelis* boys, a jungle bunny.

HAPPY HOUR — An evening entertainment provided at the table.

HOP—A dance, a la USNA.

JIMMYLEGS—Yard Policemen.

JOE—The Navy's lifeblood, coffee plus boiler compound.

JUICE—Electrical Engineering.

KAYDET — Inmate of a government

institution set up to supply Mids with bathrobes.

MISERY HALL — Overhaul spot for damaged athletes.

M.O.D. — Mate-of-the-deck, a flat-footed town crier.

MONTHLY INSULT — A paltry fraction of a Mid's pay issued to him for spending money.

NAV—Navigation.

O.A.O.—A Midshipman's true love; One and Only.

O.D.—Officer of the Watch.

P-RADE — Dress Parade.

P-WORK — Any quiz covering more than one day's assignment.

QUEEN — Opposite of Brick; a dream girl.

xx RACK—A Mid's castle, his bed.

RADIATOR SQUAD — Canteen Society of non-athletes.

RATE — Privilege or duty accruing from rank or lack of same.

REG — Regulation, the Golden Rules.

R.H.I.P.—Rank Hath Its Privileges.

RIVER—A term examination.

STEAM—Marine Engineering.

(Continued on next page)



STEERAGE — Midshipmen's soda fountain.

STRIPER—Midshipman officer in the Brigade organization.

SWABO—A zero.

TEA-FIGHT—Annapolis Tea Dance, a plebe's only chance. Must be seen to be appreciated.

TREE—Weekly list of unsats.

UNCOVER—To remove head gear.

UNSAT—Bilging, failing.

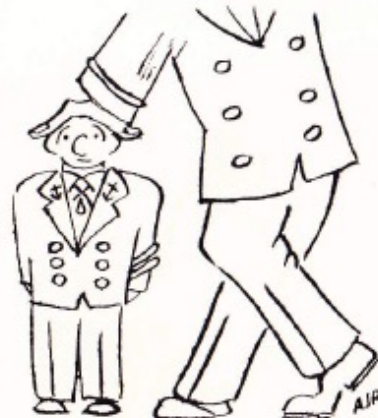
WIFE—Roommate.

W. T. DOOR—Mythical midshipman who lives in Midshipman Sample Room.

YARD ENGINE—A girl who lives inside the yard.

YOUNGSTER—A third classman.

ZIP—Zero.



SANDBLOWER

Femmes—Send in contributions to Femmes Log in January.



YOU JUST CAN NOT BEAT LOCAL SERVICE

*We feel it an honor to have been selected by the
Class of 1961 Car-Committee*

STOP OUT AND GET ACQUAINTED

New Cars and "Next to New Used Cars"

THORP CHEVROLET

1736 West St.

— Colonial 3-2311 —

Annapolis

open every evening until 9



4/c



3/c



2/c



1/c

June Week

JUNE WEEK—the mere mention of these two words to a midshipman is sufficient to set his mind wandering—either back to his past June Week or forward to those still coming. For in this short period of time, there are more hops, p-rades, social activities, and just plain good times with your drag and classmates than a layman could think possible.

To the first class, June Week means the happy ending of four years' hard work at the Academy. To the second class it means the chance to take over command of the Brigade. The Youngster sees June Week as the beginning of his ascent to command in the Navy. And to the Plebe, it is the beginning of a new life—a life he has labored one year to become a part of.

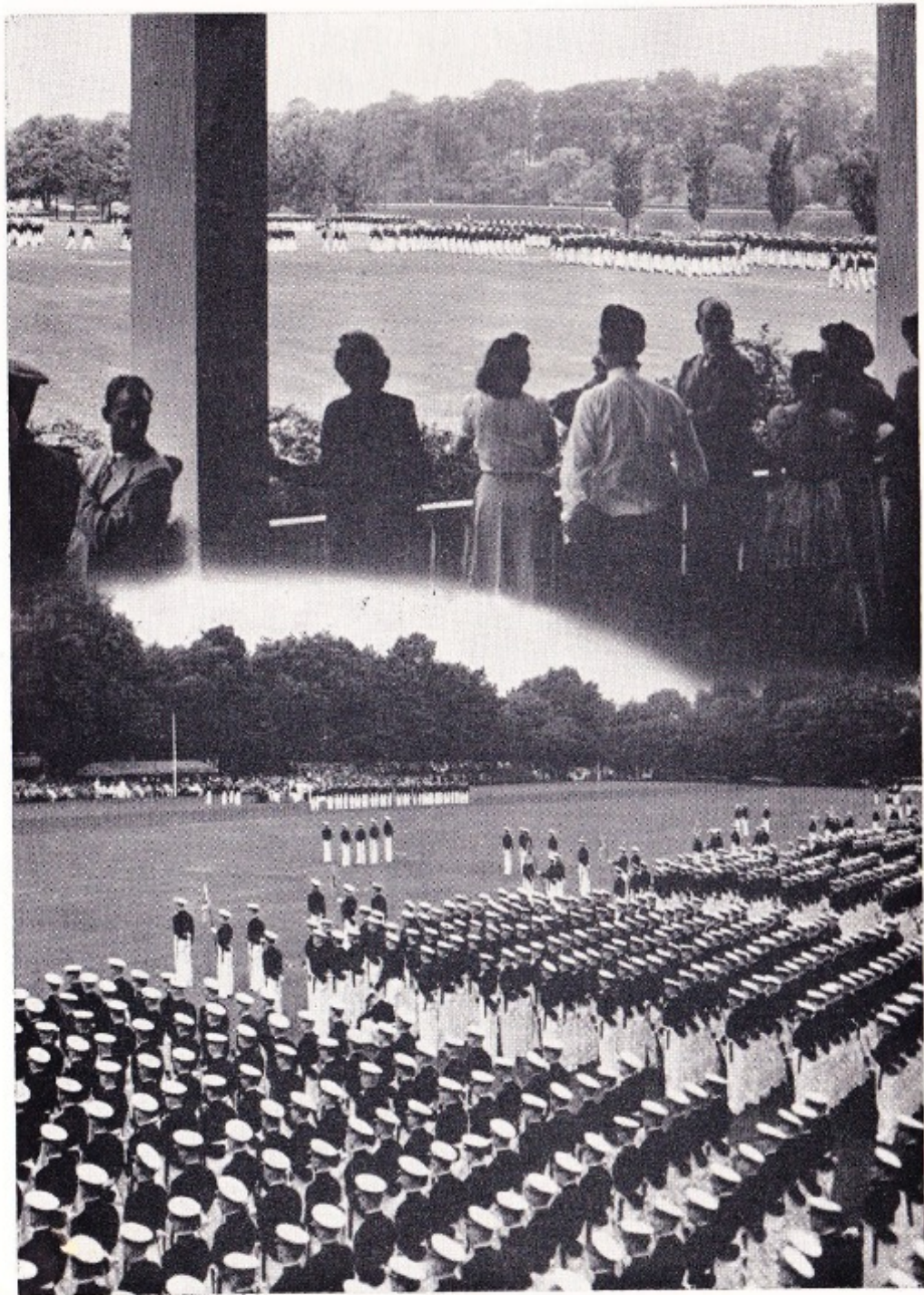
Officially June Week begins with the first June Week p-rade, but if this were the real beginning, much of the enjoyment of June Week would be lost. Unofficially the "week of weeks" begins somewhere around the first of February—right after the ever horrible mid-term exams. This is when the mids start laying their plans for that far off week. Usually a group of mids will get together and rent a house for the week with the parents of one of the mids acting as chaperones. Also, drags, this house which is to be your home for your June Week adventure is usually situated on or near a lake or river and within seven to ten miles of the Academy, depending on whether your mid is first, second, third, or fourth class.

This is the farthest that the Executive Dept. will let their charges stray from Mother Bancroft. This is also the only time of the year that underclass midshipmen are allowed to ride in cars and you can see from those distances that wheels are a necessity. Since the mids have the whole week planned down to the last minute, be prepared to travel at about a forty mile an hour clip. Any break in this schedule is going to take time away from something else—usually travelling to formation time.

The Ring Dance is one of the highlights of June Week. At this dance, the Second Class celebrate the

"Tain't no mo' plebes!"





"christening" of their rings. They "baptize" their rings in water from the seven seas and they and their drags pass through a giant replica of the ring pausing long enough for a congratulatory kiss from their drag. The Second classmen are now allowed to wear their rings as a symbol of the bond that exists between them, their classmates, and the service. Traditionally the ring is designed with the Academy crest on one side and the class crest on the other side.

On Monday the Baccalaureate Service—the last church service before graduation—is conducted. The parents, relatives, and drags of the graduating class join them in asking Divine Assistance in their forthcoming careers.

Here are a few of the main events of June Week. A big occasion for the Youngsters is the Youngster Hop, which is held in MacDonough Hall while the first and second class are going over to Dahlgren Hall for their Hop.

Another event is the "Presentation of Awards Ceremony" held in the Naval Academy Field House. Here, men who have excelled on the athletic field or in other extracurricular activities are honored for their efforts. There is also the Superintendent's garden party for the first class. During their years at the Academy, the senior class present is entertained occasionally by the Superintendent and the Commandant. This garden party is the last time that the first class will be entertained as a whole by the Superintendent.

The two major p-rades of June Week are the Presentation of Prizes

P-rade and the Color P-rade. The latter P-rade is the one during which the National and Brigade colors are presented to the company which has proved its superiority over the other twenty-three companies during the year-long "color competition."

Another event of June Week is the N Dance for members of the Brigade who belong to the N Club. Membership in this club is obtained by winning a letter in some varsity sport. There is an E Dance held the same evening for those men who have won other extra-curricular awards.

The last evening event is the Farewell Ball. All hands attend this before leaving, the first class to duty and the underclass to sea.

Wednesday marks a step up for all classes. Their first class become ensigns and so on down the line. After the first class are given their diplomas, they give "three cheers for those we leave behind" and on the third cheer, they throw their caps into the air. All that remains is for them to have their new insignia pinned on by their mothers and sweethearts. For the Fourth Class the ceremony of placing a cap on the Herndon monument still remains. The moment that the cap is up, the fourth class is no more.

June Week closes just as dramatically as it began with the departure of those remaining classes for cruise. Dewey Field is lined with sweethearts, relatives, and friends to see the midshipmen off on cruise. The Chief's Band is present for the occasion to play as the "men set out to sea."

Well, this has been "June Week

[Return to Beginning](#)

Appendix 16 A Living in the 40's and 50's

Born in the 1930s and early 40s, we exist as a very special age cohort. We are the Silent Generation. We are the smallest number of children born since the early 1900s. We are the last ones.

We are the last generation, climbing out of the depression, who can remember the winds of war and the impact of a world at war which rattled the structure of our daily lives for years.

We are the last to remember ration books for everything from gas to sugar to shoes to stoves.

We saved tin foil and poured fat into tin cans.

We hand mixed white stuff with yellow stuff to make fake butter.

We saw cars up on blocks because tires weren't available.

We can remember milk being delivered to our house early in the morning and placed in the milk box on the porch.

We are the last to hear Roosevelt's radio assurances and to see gold stars in the front windows of our grieving neighbors.

We can also remember the parades on August 15, 1945, VJ Day.

We saw the boys home from the war build their Cape Cod style houses, pouring the cellar, tar papering it over and living there until they could afford the time and money to build it out.

We are the last generation who spent childhood without television. Instead we imagined what we heard on the radio. As we all like to brag, with no TV, we spent our childhood playing outside until the street lights came on.

We did play outside and we did play on our own. There was no Little League. There was no city playground for kids. To play in the water,

we turned the fire hydrants on and ran through the spray.

The lack of television in our early years meant, for most of us, that we had little real understanding of what the world was like. Our Saturday afternoons, if at the movies, gave us newsreels of the war and the Holocaust sandwiched in between westerns and cartoons.

Telephones were one to a house, often shared and hung on the wall. Computers were called calculators and were hand cranked. Typewriters were driven by pounding fingers, throwing the carriage, and changing the ribbon. The Internet and Google were words that didn't exist. Newspapers and magazines were written for adults. We are the last group who had to find out for ourselves.

As we grew up, the country was exploding with growth. The G.I. Bill gave returning veterans the means to get an education and spurred colleges to grow. VA loans fanned a housing boom. Pent-up demand coupled with new installment payment plans put factories to work.

New highways would bring jobs and mobility. The veterans joined civic clubs and became active in politics. In the late 40s and early 50s the country seemed to lie in the embrace of brisk but quiet order as it gave birth to its new middle class (which became known as Baby Boomers).

The radio network expanded from 3 stations to thousands of stations. The telephone started to become a common method of communications and "Faxes" sent hard copy around the world.

Our parents were suddenly free from the confines of the depression and the war and they threw themselves into exploring opportunities they had never imagined.

We weren't neglected but we weren't today's all-consuming family focus. They were glad we played by ourselves until the street lights came on.

They were busy discovering the post war world.

Most of us had no life plan, but with the unexpected virtue of ignorance and an economic rising tide we simply stepped into the world and started to find out what the world was about.

We entered a world of overflowing plenty and opportunity, a world where we were welcomed. Based on our naive belief that there was more where this came from, we shaped life as we went.

We enjoyed a luxury. We felt secure in our future. Of course, just as today, not all Americans shared in this experience. Depression poverty was deep rooted. Polio was still acrippler.

The Korean War was a dark presage in the early 50s, and by mid-decade, school children were ducking under desks.

Russia built the Iron Curtain and China became Red China.

Eisenhower sent the first advisors to Vietnam, and years later, Johnson invented a war there.

Castro set up camp in Cuba and Khrushchev came to power.

We are the last generation to experience an interlude when there were no existential threats to our homeland. We came of age in the 40s an early 50s. The war was over and the Cold War, terrorism, Martin Luther King, civil rights, technological upheaval, global warming, and perpetual economic insecurity had yet to haunt life with insistent unease.

Only our generation can remember both a time of apocalyptic war and a time when our world was secure and full of bright promise and plenty.

We have lived through both.

We grew up at the best possible time, a time when the world was getting better, not worse.

We are the Silent Generation, the last ones.

Author unknown

The last of us was born in 1944, more than 99.9% of us are either retired or dead, and all of us believe we grew up in the best of times!!!!!!

[Return to main text](#)

[Return to Beginning](#)

Appendix 17 USNA63.org Bio



Steve Coester

Current Data



We have two children. Dean born in 1964 and Yvette in 1966 . Dean is now a UAL pilot after flying FA-18s and Yvette is a registered nurse. We have three Grandchildren, Stephen (Yvette's), Kristen and Nickolas(Dean's).

After graduation, I was commissioned in the Civil Engineer Corps , my desire to fly thwarted by a deaf ear caused by Youngster Cruise naval gun fire. One year after graduation I was diagnosed with a heart problem and discharged from the Navy as an Ensign.

Prior to attending grad school as part of my CEC deal, I was assigned to the Public Works Dept at Lemoore NAS. One of my assignments in 1964 was to design a pedestal to hold an A-4 Skyhawk near the entrance. After my Seabees completed the big concrete pedestal we mounted a Seabee statue on top of it and had a dedication ceremony. We didn't have the A-4 yet. They were phasing out the A-1 Skyraider at that time and during the ceremony the A-1 squadron flew over in formation and dropped leaflets. We picked them up and they paraphrased the old Tareyton cigarette commercial saying " We'd Rather Fight than Switch!"



Just before being medically discharged I was tasked to set up the hangers for the brand new A-7 Corsair which hadn't arrived yet. I spent hours in a secure room reviewing classified specifications.

Life at Lemoore was wonderful for us newlyweds. Lots of trips to Sequoia and Yosemite National Parks, tennis and squash tournaments and a good boss in Cdr Rumble (later RADM) and his lovely wife Althea. A big celebration at the Lemoore O'club was planned for Yvonne's 21st birthday, which was abruptly canceled when President Kennedy was assassinated on her day, November

22, 1963.



Yvonne In Drag



Graduation



**June 21, 1963 in
Stockholm,
Sweden**



**Post
Wedding**

From my medical separation from the Navy in late 1964 until my retirement in 1997, I launched rockets at Kennedy Space Center and Canaveral Air Force Station for Boeing, General Dynamics, Rockwell and Boeing again. . My specialties were propulsion and pneumatics, as well as the associated electronics, instrumentation and computer software. In 1972, I got my MBA from Florida State University. I worked on the Apollo/Saturn V, Skylab, Atlas-Centaur, Titan-Centaur, and Space Shuttle programs. Biggest work thrill was launching Apollo 11 to the moon and the biggest challenge was preparing the Shuttle Main Propulsion System for its first launch. I was the Supervisor of Space Shuttle Main Propulsion Engineering. After contract transition I became a MPS System Specialist. I helped to launch 115 missions from the launch control room during my career. I retired in 1997 and Yvonne and I continue to live in our Rockledge, FL home.

I played tournament tennis winning the 12th Naval District singles and doubles in 1964 while being processed out of the Navy because of my heart problem. Strange! I continued playing local tournaments in Florida until the onset of arthritis made me hang up my racket at age

thirty-five. For another ten years I played pretty competitive racketball, but now walk, bike, and swim and ski for exercise.

From 1967 until 1990 SCUBA diving and camping were the family's major recreational activities with many trips to the Florida Keys, Bahamas, Mexico, Honduras, and Hawaii, and many good (click link) [shark story](#) and [another shark story](#) . Also a couple of tales about an [octopus and a moray eel](#)

We were introduced to snow skiing in 1995 and became hooked so that now it rules our lives. Instead of sending all of our money to the University of Florida for our kids' education, it now goes West to the ski resorts of California, Colorado, Utah, and British Columbia.

My local grandson Stephen started playing tennis in May 2004 and I started hitting a little to help him improve. I found out I could manage the pain and now after a twenty-eight year rest I'm playing about five times a week including an over-fifty league.



Young Steve Tennis

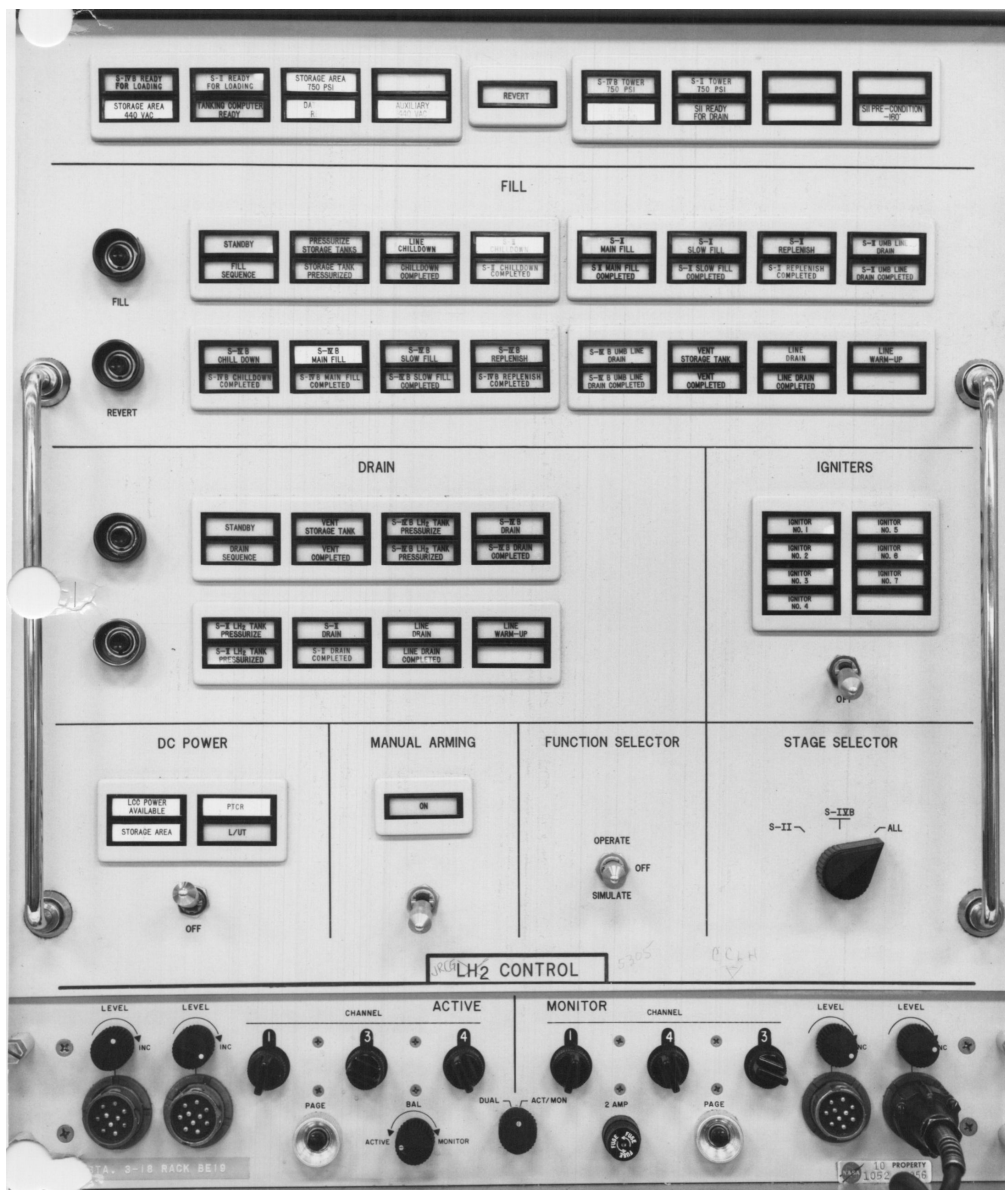


Old Steve Tennis

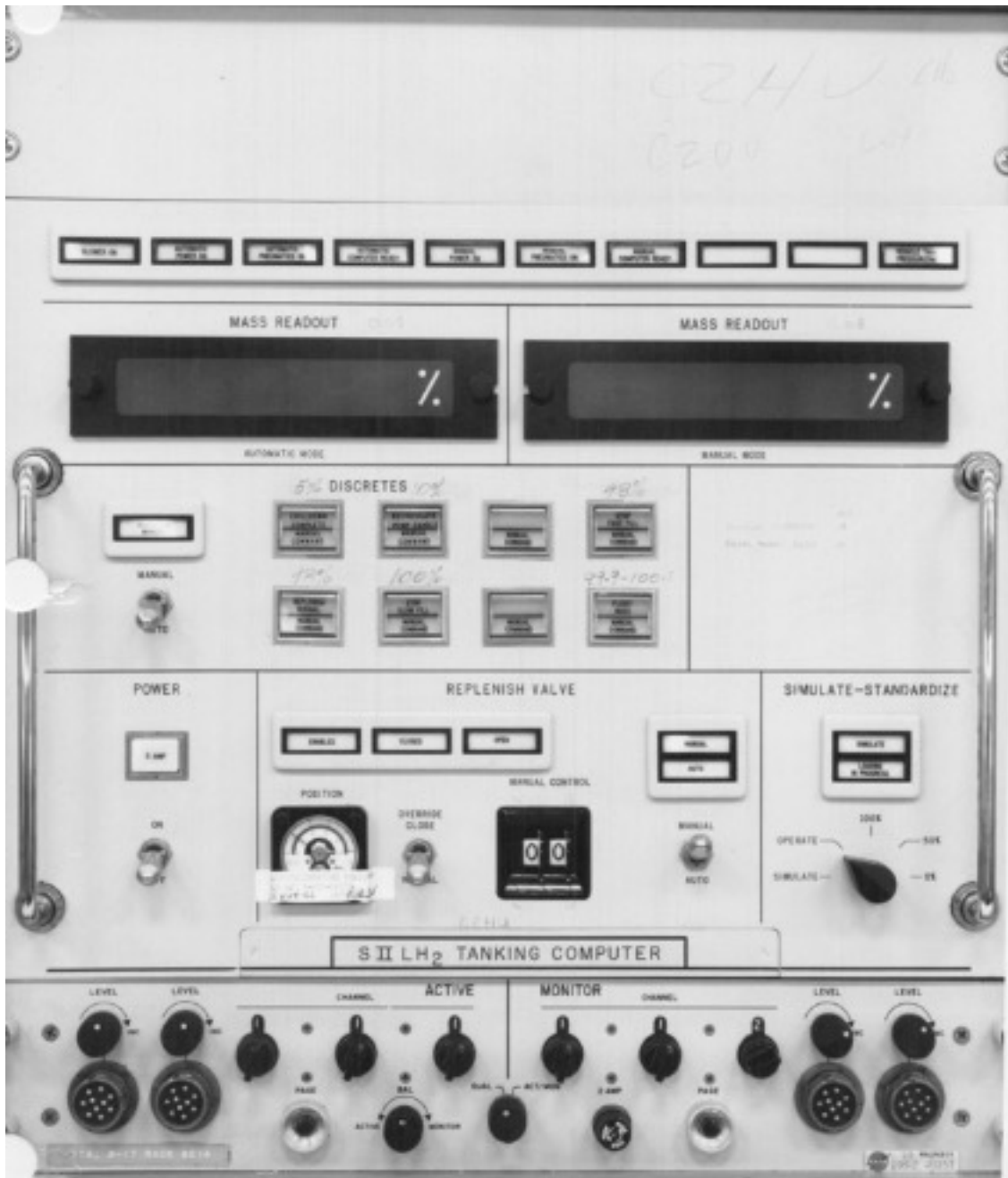
Yvonne developed her painting and craft skills and with a little ambition on our part could have beat Martha Stewart to the punch. With some trepidation she followed me into the depths and up on the slopes, but became competent in everything she tries. She has made our marriage a complete joy for all of these years.

[Return to main page](#)
[Return to Beginning](#)

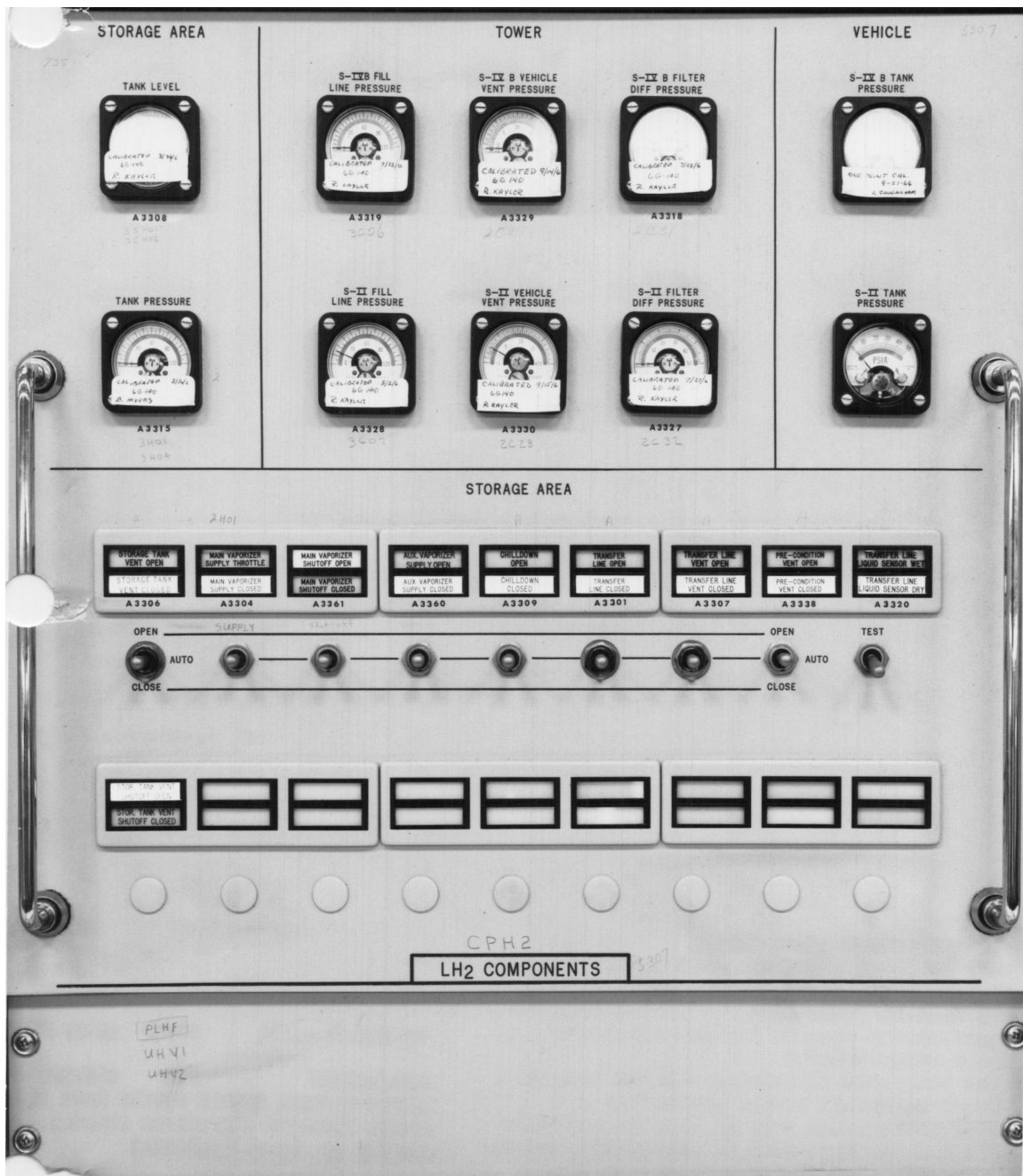
Appendix 18 Apollo-Saturn Liquid Hydrogen Firing Room Consoles

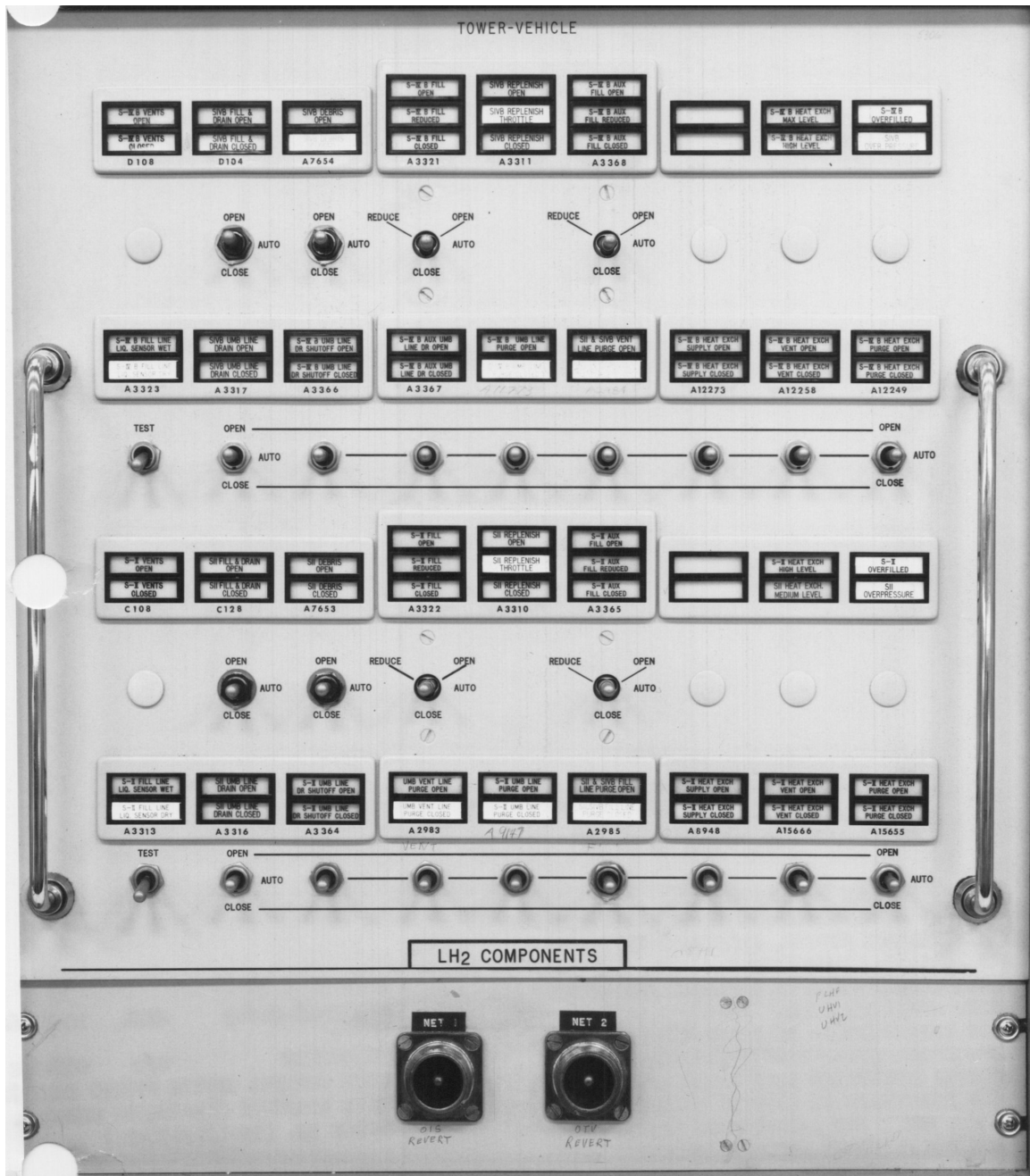






BE16 S-II LH2 TANKING COMPUTER FR1





[Return to main page](#)
[Return to Beginning](#)

Appendix 19 Nicky McCabe and Ben Dent Wedding Speech

The Wedding of Nicky McCabe and Ben Dent
by Steve Coester

I am honored to have the opportunity to speak for Nicky and Ben. This is such a wonderful setting in which to celebrate their marriage vows. Such beauty and pageantry . We are all privileged to participate.

First I pay tribute to my dear friend and Nicky's mother, Barbara McCabe. She has been my wife's close friend for too many years to mention (does 1957 give a hint?), has raised two wonderful daughters and now has given Nicky in marriage. Barbara is one of the loveliest women I've had the pleasure to know. Yvonne and I cherish her friendship. Also I want to remember Peter who left us prematurely for that great golf club in the sky. We had great times with Peter and miss him greatly. We have just met Rosemary (Pooh) and Harns Dent and join Barbara (and Nicky, I suppose) in thanking them for saving Nicky from a life of spinster hood by producing Ben.

Before getting to the nitty-gritty about Ben and Nicky, I thought it appropriate to share a short reading with you. This thought provoking verse was taken from Ben's favorite book and will give you a better insight into the thoughts and sensitivities of our newlyweds and it emphasizes their maturity and readiness for marriage.

Winnie the Pooh
Winnie the Pooh
Tubby little cubby all stuffed with fluff
He's Winnie the Pooh
Winnie the Pooh
Willy nilly silly old bear

It really brings tears to your eyes, doesn't it?

Okay, enough of this maudlin sensitivity. Although Yvonne and I live thousands of miles away, we have watched Nicky grow from a little girl to the beautiful bride we honor today. We only met Ben last year when they came to America and visited us. I took Nicky, and Ben, and Barbara on a full day kayak trip deep in the alligator infested swamps of Florida and got to know Ben quite well. Mainly I learned how fast he can paddle when he's really terrified. He's a fine fellow and a loving companion for Nicky.

Now as for Nicky, I have many memories going back almost to her infancy. As a young girl I mainly remember her wonderful poise and manners. A few years later I see her as the teenager who had just completed a cross-Atlantic sailing trip on a Tall Ship. Picture her climbing the ratlines, shimmying out on the spars high above raging waves, ripping her fingers on unyielding canvas. Nicky is no shrinking violet. She has spirit, determination, and a sense of adventure that will keep Ben hopping and make their marriage rich and rewarding. As a young adult she is mature and professional, yet always displays a sharp wit and wicked humor. At every age Nicky has been special. Now she's carved a very successful career and with Ben is starting her most challenging job. Marriage.

At this point I have to credit my spy in England, Lisa, who provided me with the lurid details of the courtship of Nicky and Ben. It seems that Nicky may be just a little dense despite the nice things I've said about her. And just as bad, Ben seems to be a wee bit slow. They met at Pembroke College Cambridge, which even we in the Colonies have heard about. A decent school, I'm told, which requires some degree of intellect of its students. Well the way these two carried on, I just don't know. They met at the end of their first year there. Then for the whole next year lived in the same house along with eleven others. At that time, Ben started plotting his campaign, but Nicky was oblivious to his increasing attentions. I think Ben was plodding instead of plotting. Ben was much too British to just scream "I want you" so they remained "just friends" for their second year at Cambridge. In their third year, I guess that Ben's hormones finally kicked in and he started his war of attrition to gain Nicky's affection. He developed a wily plan to make Nicky dependent on him. Ben is a fine cook so he made this weapon number one. He fed Nicky most every night and plied her with wine and flowers

(mostly wine). This is a direct quote from Nicky, " Ben generally treated me very well" An understatement I'm sure.

Now all this time old slowpoke Ben still hadn't made it clear to our dense young heroine that his intentions were to be more than her manservant. He was ready for love. Finally, he came up with a brilliant plan to wake up Nicky and gain her love. He managed to get himself mugged and beaten. (I thought that was an American thing.) He came home bleeding and hurting. He needed love and attention. Somewhat extreme, but it worked. Bingo, the light bulb flashed over Nicky's head and she realized that this guy needed her--and that she wanted him.

Well the rest is history and for five years they have strengthened their relationship and built their love for each other. Today is the end of that beginning. Now they must join their strengths to make their union stronger than each person alone, while maintaining their individuality. My single piece of advice to the newlyweds is to respect each other. Respect is the cornerstone of love.

I've been talking long enough. I will leave with one more verse from Winnie the Pooh. I don't know if it is appropriate, but it struck me. Imagine for a moment that Nicky is Christopher Robin and that Ben is Pooh Bear. They are sitting in that Enchanted Place in the 100 Acre Wood. Christopher says:

"Pooh, when I'm - you know - when I'm not doing Nothing, will you come up here sometimes?"

"Just me?" says Pooh

"Yes, Pooh."

"Will you be here too?" asks Pooh

"Yes, Pooh, I will be really. I promise I will be, Pooh."

"That's good," said Pooh.

"Pooh, promise you won't forget about me, ever. Not even when I am a hundred."

Pooh thought for a little.

"How old shall I be then?" asked Pooh

"Ninety-nine." replied Robin

Pooh nodded.

"I promise," Pooh said...

T.T.F.N. and God Bless you Both

[Return to main page](#)

[Return to Beginning](#)